

2010-2011 Think Tank Initiative Annual Report

THINK TANKS:

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AT WORK

The **Think Tank Initiative** supports 51 independent policy research institutions in the developing world. These think tanks effect change in their societies. They strengthen public policy debates and promote more objective, evidence-based decision-making to help improve the lives of their fellow citizens.

FROM OUR PROGRAM MANAGER

Marie-Claude Martin

For more than 40 years, IDRC has been supporting research in developing countries – research that leads to long-term solutions and promotes growth and development. The creation of the Think Tank Initiative, in collaboration with our funding partners, serves to reinforce this mission.

2010–2011 marks the Think Tank Initiative’s third fiscal year. Over the course of this period, the Initiative began funding 28 Latin American and South Asian institutions, which joined the African think tanks already on board. The program now funds 51 think tanks in 23 countries: institutions with ambitious objectives, jointly agreed to with the Initiative, hard at work to achieve their goals. This report is the first in a series that will illustrate their efforts and the challenges they face, and convince you, I hope, that their contribution to the betterment of their people is real.

During the past year, the Initiative has received considerable attention from the media and from many players (including other funders), being perceived as *ahead of the curve* in terms of its support to research in developing countries. In the context of ‘democratization’ of research, where both local decision-makers and external funders are increasingly convinced of a need to involve local institutions in policy debates, programs such as the Think Tank Initiative serve as an important benchmark.

Our team is committed to supporting all institutions in their efforts to consolidate their positions as strong and sustainable think tanks well beyond the end of the program. We are also strengthening the evidence that demonstrates the role policy research organizations play in the development process, and convincing others of their value in the design and implementation of sound policies.

I hope you will appreciate reading about what the institutions and the Think Tank Initiative have worked on and learned over the past year.

FROM THE CHAIR OF OUR INTERNATIONAL ADVISORY GROUP

Maureen O'Neil

The International Advisory Group (IAG) advises the Think Tank Initiative. The IAG played a key role in the selection of the Initiative's funded think tanks and provides strategic guidance to this unique program to ensure its success.

The Think Tank Initiative was founded on the belief that local think tanks can promote public dialogue and accelerate evidence-informed policy changes. Most of the think tanks selected are already making tangible contributions in their countries on critical issues that affect their peoples' lives; matters such as food pricing, maternal health, climate change adaptation, and education reform. And while it is always a challenge to measure the exact influence these institutions are having on policy-makers, the program's own research shows that there is a demand for robust evidence and a clear opportunity for think tanks to provide it.

The institutions supported by the Think Tank Initiative are also demonstrating they can be more effective when they have predictable and long-term core funding. Many institutions now have a forward-looking and continuous research agenda based on their own national priorities, others are engaging more strategically and systematically with the policy sphere in their countries, becoming active voices in the most important policy debates. Many more are helping build long-term research capacity through regular seminars with researchers, sharing sound research practices.

Supporting these think tanks enables them to enhance their performance and the evidence base for policy-making. We hope this model of support which recognizes the crucial importance of predictable financing will be emulated by other national and international funders.

On behalf of the International Advisory Group, I invite you to review the following pages and explore the range of substantive and innovative policy research that these institutions lead.



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ABOUT THE THINK TANK INITIATIVE

The Think Tank Initiative is a multi-donor program dedicated to strengthening the capacity of independent policy research organizations in the developing world. Launched in 2008 and managed by Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Initiative is a partnership between IDRC, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS).

The Initiative currently provides 51 think tanks in 23 countries with core, non-earmarked funding. This support allows the institutions to attract, retain and build local talent, develop an independent research program, and invest in public outreach to ensure that research results inform and influence national and regional policy debates.

This funding, in the shape of core grants, is combined with dedicated technical support in three broad areas: research methods and skills, policy engagement and communication, and general organizational development. Among other activities, the Initiative supports peer-to-peer review, learning and exchange by bringing together the funded institutions and outside experts.

Strengthening policy research institutions is a long-term endeavour. The Think Tank Initiative is, therefore, envisioned as a 10-year program. The five donor partners have jointly committed approximately 113 million CAD to its first phase, slated to end in 2014. An external evaluation of the program will help shape its second phase.

The specific objectives of the Think Tank Initiative are to:

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

THE THINK TANK INITIATIVE **IN BRIEF**

2008

The year the Initiative was launched.

5

Donors.

including IDRC, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) of the Netherlands. The five donors constitute the Executive Committee, the Initiative's governing body.

51

Think tanks.

12 in East Africa	11 in West Africa
12 in Latin America	16 in South Asia

2014

The end of the program's first phase, and the expected date of launch of the second phase.

113

Million CAD committed by the donors for the program's first phase.*

42 million – William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
42 million – Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
14 million – IDRC
9 million – DFID
6 million – DGIS

**All figures are based on the average exchange rate in the year 2010–2011*

23

Countries.

10

International experts that constitute the program's International Advisory Group.

LOCAL RESEARCH AND CORE SUPPORT

The Think Tank Initiative believes in two main tenets: 1) Local knowledge is fundamental to the development of sound policy; and 2) Think tanks are more effective when they have predictable core funding.

On Local Research

Public policies work best when they are designed and implemented by local actors. In the developing world, much of the research underlying these policies is led and carried out by external research institutions, as opposed to those based in the country in question. This is unfortunate, as local researchers have a vested interest in the development of the best possible policy.

Where externally-driven research is too often detached from the local policy context, local research can more accurately reflect local realities. Quality policy-relevant research requires an understanding of past and present context and future aspirations.

With the support of the Think Tank Initiative, policy actors in 23 developing countries can increasingly expect a coherent and focused flow of research from think tanks in their own countries.

On Core Support

Research institutions in developing countries rarely receive the kind of predictable core support that would allow them to carry out long-term planning, establish their own research priorities, and invest in creating strong research programs. While international donors do provide financial support, it is usually for one-off projects, which the donor often designs and leads.

Core funding permits think tanks to define their own research agendas, to retain independence and to invest in sustained and structured thinking, and do so more flexibly. In fluid local policy contexts, non-earmarked core funding strengthens the think tanks' ability to respond to policy windows.

Core funding enhances not just freedom and strategic response but also the quality of research output: in countries where too much talent is lost to international institutions, sustainably funded local think tanks are more able to attract and retain the quality staff essential for their success. The Think Tank Initiative hopes that its investment in the intellectual infrastructure of developing countries will support the future generation of local researchers.

In the following pages, we present the institutions supported by the Think Tank Initiative, highlighting the work they carry out and the context they operate in, and providing some examples of the program's support and its contribution. Two institutions in each region are profiled in more detail to illustrate the valuable research that think tanks carry out, as well as the types of challenges, strategies and achievements that are linked to their work.

INTRODUCING THE THINK TANKS

The think tanks selected by the Think Tank Initiative are a small sample of a larger community of policy research institutions working towards formulating better policies in their countries.

52 policy research institutions were selected after two competitive Calls for Expressions of Interest. The first Call was issued in 2008 in East and West Africa and the second in 2009 in Latin America and South Asia. Over six hundred proposals were received. A great number of them, while not selected, were well-deserving.

The selection of the think tanks supported by the Initiative was a competitive one based on rigorous standards. These standards remain as the program encourages its funded institutions to make substantial efforts in attaining the goals they have set out for themselves. The Initiative gauges the progress of each institution on a continuous basis and makes decisions, with the help of the International Advisory Group, on the renewal or continuation of each grant.

Four years versus two

In the first round of Initiative funding received by East and West African institutions grants were provided either for two or four years. In May 2010, however, the Think Tank Initiative's International Advisory Group reflected on the merits of these two types of grants.

On the one hand, two-year grants were an effective way for the Initiative to manage risk as well as provide an opportunity for small and young institutions to define their strategic vision and begin implementing it. On the other, two-year grants did not provide the kind of time and financial security needed to put into action a long-term strategy and research agenda, and made it more difficult to attract highly qualified staff. All this, it was agreed, risked the innovation and creativity that the program intended to nurture.

It was decided that only four-year core grants would be awarded to the Latin American and South Asian institutions. Eight of the nine African institutions receiving two-year grants obtained renewals based on their performance. The next renewal process for all the institutions is scheduled for the end of the first phase in 2014.

Meanwhile, through the Initiative's monitoring system, program staff continue to assess performance, also with a view to determine if and how this longer term of support is better helping institutions to reach their full potential.

A Competitive Selection



East Africa

5 countries
136 proposals
13 selected
institutions*

West Africa

6 countries
148 proposals
11 selected
institutions

Latin America

7 countries
165 proposals
12 selected
institutions

South Asia

5 countries
158 proposals
16 selected
institutions

**One institution's grant was not renewed. There are now 12 funded institutions in East Africa.*

There are few, if any, countries and regions where the program would not be welcome. Given limited resources however, the program is focusing on a small number of countries that meet specific criteria such as a degree of both political openness and policy research capacity.

These countries are:

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

HOW CORE SUPPORT IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

The provision of *core*, and not *project*, support by the Think Tank Initiative has already had an institutional impact in many of the funded think tanks:

- The Ugandan Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) and the Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) in Kenya have purchased costly statistical and modelling software. The simple ability to afford the appropriate tools has led to the production of more robust research.
- The Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF), in Tanzania, reduced its share of commissioned work and is now focusing on a number of strategic projects. What used to stand alone as a commissioned research unit has now been reintegrated into the unit responsible for research and publications.
- The Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), in Ghana, has built new relationships with public and private media to better communicate its research results to the policy community, civil society organizations, and the private sector.
- The African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE), in Nigeria, has improved its governance systems and better communicates with and reports to its Board of Directors, which has resulted in increasing support from its governing bodies.
- *Fundación ARU* in Bolivia, one of the program's younger institutions, has begun setting up the organizational structure that will sustain its policy research activities: it has defined its long-term research agenda, increased its pool of researchers, and designed a new governance structure that separates the strategic and executive functions.
- Another Bolivian institution, the *Instituto de Estudios Avanzados en Desarrollo* (INESAD), has seen its visibility increase through being associated with the Think Tank Initiative. New donors have approached the institution for the first time to explore partnerships.
- *Grupo FARO*, in Ecuador, has created a new Research Director position, which in turn has supported the implementation of formal systems of research quality control and support for researchers, resulting in improved research products and dissemination.
- The Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS) has adapted the Initiative's monitoring and evaluation tools to improve its own internal organizational performance monitoring system. The discussion and planning that went into the development of this monitoring and evaluation system has created awareness of organizational strengths and weaknesses among the staff, which has also increased motivation and pride.
- The Public Affairs Centre (PAC), in India, has organized exchange platforms where staff from like-minded organizations based in other countries, and even other regions, visit the institution for mutual capacity building.

THE EAST AFRICAN COHORT



In the years immediately following independence in East Africa, policy research was almost entirely dominated by international financial institutions. Increasingly, this is no longer the case: many East African governments now have their own research departments, as do some special interest groups and civil society organizations, and there is a growing number of local think tanks dedicated to producing policy-relevant research.

At the same time, there has been rising demand for policy research from East Africa's increasingly democratic and open governments. This shift toward a more pluralistic, democratic debate in the region raises opportunities for think tanks to play an important role. Strong researchers and institutions exist, but support is required to empower them to ensure that policy research has an impact on the policy-making process in the region.

The opportunity that the Think Tank Initiative provides in East Africa is being seized by 12 policy research institutions. These institutions are moving away from consulting activities to more progressive forward looking research agendas that aim to shift the overarching development discourse.

They are also becoming more visible in their countries and in East Africa as a whole as they collaborate more substantially with each other and with other research bodies, promoting evidence-based policy. For example, Tanzania has, for the first time, created a national research fund, and two Initiative funded institutions, the African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS Tanzania) and the Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF) are part of its steering committee, helping define a national research agenda.

For some of the East African institutions, receiving funding from the Think Tank Initiative has encouraged their other funders to renew and even expand their support. And other donors in the region are beginning to engage with these institutions in a meaningful way, a hopeful sign that international donors may be more open to work with East African policy researchers.

But the key challenge of limited in-country pools of professionals remains. The think tanks supported by the Initiative are contending with how to sustain competitive packages and work environments that are critical to retain quality staff and increase their research capacity.

EVIDENCE-BASED POLICY ADVOCACY

Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE), Uganda

ACODE was founded in 1999 as an independent research and advocacy think tank. Being the first institute of its kind in Uganda, ACODE changed the policy advocacy landscape in the Eastern and Southern Africa sub-region. As Executive Director Godber Tumushabe says, ACODE has always strived to become “a premier public policy and advocacy think tank, working for social justice and good governance in Africa.”

A long-standing innovator in the region, ACODE pioneered advocacy and communications mechanisms including breakfast meetings, citizens’ policy clinics and the use of mobile technologies such as Short Message Service (SMS) to share information and build the debate.

The institution is a reputable provider of critical perspectives on development issues and is very visible at high-level policy forums and in the media. ACODE’s agricultural sector financing study, for example, resulted in advocacy materials which were used by the Uganda National Farmers’ Federation in its efforts to inform and influence national agricultural policy.

A prime example of ACODE’s activities and its desire to involve citizens in policy debates is the State of the Nation platform, a public forum concept that was on the shelves, due to lack of funds, until ACODE obtained the Initiative’s support. A monthly national forum, the platform promotes upward and downward conversation on key public policy and governance issues in Uganda and facilitates exchanges among the public and private sector, civil society, the media, interested groups and the citizens of Uganda.

The Think Tank Initiative has helped ACODE to recruit and diversify its full-time research personnel, which has boosted the institution’s own production of analytical evidence, on which its policy advocacy is grounded. In the years ahead, the program will continue to work with ACODE on this key challenge of strengthening its research in order for its advocacy work to remain powerful and credible over the long term.

BUILDING RWANDA'S HUMAN CAPACITY

Institute for Policy Analysis and Research (IPAR), Rwanda

Established in 2008, IPAR-Rwanda is one of the Think Tank Initiative's youngest institutions. IPAR's research areas include economic growth, governance, education and regional integration.

Despite its age, IPAR has become a leading voice in the Rwandan policy research world. For example, it is working on projects examining the government's ambitious education policies. Rwanda recently announced its intention to ensure that every Rwandan child has access to 12 years of free education. IPAR's research aims at ensuring the quality, equity, and efficiency of this new education scheme.

In 2011, IPAR completed a study showing that the country's growth of foreign direct investment (FDI) was not driven by the tax incentives introduced for this purpose, but rather by the fact that foreign investors did not have to deal with corruption and bureaucracy when doing business in Rwanda. The study has attracted significant interest and has generated a lot of discussion in policy circles.

The lack of research capacity in the country is a major challenge. An important aspect of IPAR's mission is thus to create a "critical mass of researchers" in Rwanda. The Economic Policy Research Network (EPRN) is a means to accomplish this goal. Hosted by IPAR, the EPRN is a joint partnership between IPAR, the World Bank, the National Institute of Statistics, the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, the National Bank of Rwanda, and the National University of Rwanda. This network brings together researchers and analysts from a wide range of sectors and groups in order to contribute to the policy debate in Rwanda.

IPAR-Rwanda has used the funding from the Think Tank Initiative to train staff in proposal writing, research methods, policy analysis, and writing for peer-reviewed publications – contributions that are very important given that the institute is quite young and is staffed by very young professionals. The grant has also supported this think tank in designing and launching the Rwanda Public Policy Observatory, a regular publication that fills important information gaps in the country. The latest edition featured an index of laws, policies, strategies and programs in the country, and a guide to gender-related laws, policies and programs in Rwanda.

In short, the Think Tank Initiative's funding has been momentous for IPAR; specifically, IPAR's new ability to set its own research agenda, an important means for the institute to secure independence. With the help of the Initiative, IPAR, while continuing to work on building its reactive research, is also developing a proactive research stream that can investigate issues of relevance to Rwanda as and when required.

THE WEST AFRICAN COHORT



Faced with lower economic growth on average than other regions and characterized by fragile political systems, West Africa may be the place where the potential impact of think tanks could be the most transformative. In fact, policy research institutions in the region have a unique opportunity to provide substance to public discussions and policy debates on the main challenges faced by local communities as several countries in the region go through elections in 2011-2012.

Despite recent encouraging signs in all countries, think tanks are faced with a challenging policy-making environment as key decision-makers remain guarded about the motivation and possible political agendas of independent research institutions.

Most institutions from the region are still struggling to encourage policy-makers to use local economic research as an input for the design of local policies and to share their own databases (such as those of the national institutes of statistics) for the production of policy analyses.

But despite these challenges, the eleven West African institutions have already shown that they have a noticeable impact on economic policy-making in their respective countries. This is a first result of the efforts these think tanks have sustained over the recent years with support from the Initiative, such as: setting up international research standards, improving work and research ethics, providing incentives for their researchers, improving the packaging and dissemination of research products, and strengthening in-house governance and management.

The Initiative's support to think tanks in West Africa is contributing to a fundamental shift in these institutions towards competitive and viable research agendas, foreseeable actions and a clear strategy for policy outreach.

CHANGING THE LAW

Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA), Ghana

The Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA) was Ghana's first public policy research think tank, established with the mission to broaden the debate on public policy, promote private-sector-led economic growth, and strengthen the pillars of democracy.

Ghana is rich in natural resources, yet has remained poor. "Due to weak policies and laws governing our natural resource sector, we have not been able, as a country, to accelerate development and reduce poverty. Our policies have perpetuated corruption rather than development," says IEA Executive Director Jean Mensa.

The discovery of oil in 2009 provided a second opportunity for the country to put in place the right framework and policies that would ensure economic growth and development. Therefore, equipped with funding from the Think Tank Initiative, IEA hired experienced economists, enhanced its statistical and software packages, and conducted its first research study on how to harness Ghana's oil and gas resources for sustainable development. The study aimed at establishing the framework for the efficient use and management of oil revenues to ensure economic development and poverty reduction.

IEA then undertook an extensive advocacy effort including engagement with the Presidency's office and Members of Parliament. As a result, most of IEA's recommendations were included in a new law that commits 70% of oil revenues to developing Ghana's physical and social infrastructure. The remaining revenue will be set aside to cushion the economy from shocks and to benefit future generations.

Through this effort, IEA is now viewed as one of Ghana's most credible organizations undertaking independent, high-quality research; even Ghana's President praised its work in his State of the Nation addresses in 2009 and 2010. In the words of Jean Mensa, "indeed, the Initiative's support has positioned IEA to play a critical and more significant role in Ghana's development process."

The Think Tank Initiative has also inspired IEA to track its impact. As a result of the program's diagnostic visit to the institution and its workshop on Monitoring and Evaluation in Nairobi 2009, IEA's management became aware of the importance of defining institutional objectives and monitoring progress. Over the past project year, IEA has collated information regarding the application of its research findings and recommendations from 2009 to mid-2011 by following policy statements and tracking references to its policy recommendations reported in the media.

With help from the Initiative, IEA is also building the capacity of its younger researchers through training and mentoring from senior economists, in order to meet a critical challenge: that of increasing its research quality to solidify the credibility it has built.

STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

Consortium pour la Recherche Economique et Sociale (CRES), Senegal

CRES was founded in 2004 by a multi-disciplinary group of researchers and academics from the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar. With a particular focus on economics and social sciences, CRES' mission is to build the research and analytical capacity in Senegal, and to inform decision-makers on issues facing both the country and the region.

The institution is particularly proud of its efforts in building a relationship with the Senegalese government, a major step given the gap that exists in West Africa between policy and research. For instance, some of CRES' researchers and those of the Ministry of Education have been working together since the 1990s, developing a series of studies on education in the country. The results and recommendations of one of their studies, including showing that the Senegalese are willing to pay for better quality education, contributed to the elaboration of a new policy for higher education in Senegal.

CRES has also worked closely with the Ministry of Health and Prevention and with non-governmental national and local groups on tobacco legislation in Senegal. CRES partnered with the Ministry to help Senegalese law comply with many of the provisions of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control. This stream of work also included engaging with the Rural Community Council of Touba Mosque in order to enforce a trade and smoking ban in the holy city of Touba, which is home to 10 percent of the Senegalese population.

CRES' expertise was also of critical importance for the government of Senegal during the development of its national agricultural program in line with its commitments to the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). While many other African countries relied on international advisors in the development of these strategies, the Senegalese government relied entirely on CRES, thereby ensuring that the final products truly presented the opinions and hopes of the people of Senegal.

CRES has used the Think Tank Initiative's funding to support its research capacity development through workshops on quantitative economics and impact evaluation methodologies as well as exchange visits for research staff. It has also used the funding to recruit public relations specialists and create a dynamic communications department, enabling CRES to effectively reach out to various stakeholders.

As the demand for CRES' work from the Senegalese government continues to increase, its challenge will be to seek a steady but manageable growth while working with a broader set of actors, beyond government, to ensure the institution's sustainability.

THE LATIN AMERICAN COHORT



Think tanks in Latin America are extremely diverse – as are the political systems of the countries within which these institutions operate. In South America, most policy research institutions emerged several decades ago, as a response to authoritarian governments, and many of these institutions have become regional referents due to the quality of their research and institutional maturity. Central America has on average younger institutions, formed during recent democratic transitions and operating in a context of democratic consolidation, in which governments face acute challenges intensified by security threats.

While facing difficulties common to all regions, such as limited sources of funding, shortage of qualified researchers, and rapidly changing political landscapes, Latin American think tanks also face the challenges associated with a growing technical specialization of government cadres.

This transformation presents two challenges for think tanks in the region: on one hand, the increased demand from governments for qualified analysts strains the already scarce supply of policy professionals. On the other, think tanks in the region need to find effective ways of interacting with a new breed of government policy-makers who are better equipped to discuss evidence-based policies. The increased attention that policy-makers pay to sub-national issues is another common transformation in the policy-making context of the region. The perceived lower capabilities for developing evidence-based policy at the sub-national level call for attention to that particular niche.

But as democracies consolidate and governments become more transparent and citizen-oriented, there are also unprecedented opportunities for the Latin American think tanks. Particularly since the region has a culture of social policy innovation – as, for example, the development and the implementation of conditional cash transfer programs demonstrate. With support from the Initiative, the twelve funded Latin American institutions are investing in their capacity to propel this innovation.

The Latin American cohort includes successful, well-established think tanks that, in addition to addressing their own sets of challenges, are also playing a “mentoring role” to some of the newer institutions confronting similar issues as they did some time ago.

AN INTEGRATED APPROACH

Centro Ecuatoriano de Derecho Ambiental (CEDA), Ecuador

CEDA is dedicated to promoting environmental legislation as a means to protect the environment in Ecuador. It does this through a focus on conservation, sustainability, and governance.

The institution prides itself on having a multidisciplinary research agenda that brings an integrated social, environmental and economic focus to its work. In the view of CEDA's Executive Director, Gabriela Muñoz, this "added value" is what allows CEDA not only to assess environmental policies but also to propose options for social and economic change.

For example, a recent CEDA project led a comprehensive analysis of the current global situation and trends related to renewable energy and energy transfers. The study also examined possible outcomes and the technical, social and environmental impact of adopting renewable energy in Ecuador.

The institution's research has helped to inform and empower not only decision-makers but local communities as well. In the Galapagos Islands, a CEDA study on the management and access to environmental information allowed community leaders to understand the policies which affect their islands as well as their rights.

CEDA also works toward strengthening public institutions in order to improve environmental governance and democratize decision-making processes. It does this at a national level by helping different environmental bodies coordinate their work, and at the local level by training judges, district attorneys and the police in small communities to ensure that environmental laws are complied with.

One of the challenges ahead for CEDA is negotiating the trade-off between being able to drive its own research agenda, maintaining its independence, and being financially stable. In that regard, CEDA has developed, with support from the Initiative, a strategic approach to tackle such challenges. CEDA has had the space to develop a strategic plan and a financial sustainability proposal, an exercise that the institution describes as "an important milestone in institutional strengthening." An early result of the implementation of CEDA's new strategy is the consolidation of a research agenda responsive to key policy issues in Ecuador.

A STRONG IDENTITY

Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE), Peru

GRADE was created in 1980 in response to its founders' desire to find the most effective way for Peruvian social scientists to contribute to the decision-making process in their country. Thirty-one years later, GRADE is still generating high quality research for Peru's development. In the words of its Executive Director, Dr. Martin Benavides, "research is GRADE's heart."

With such a clear identity it is not surprising that the institution has a strong track record of applied research in macroeconomics, education, poverty, health, and the environment, among other issues. But GRADE's researchers do not only carry out research, they also participate in advisory boards and consultative committees, and directly engage with government officials to discuss policy proposals.

GRADE is under tremendous pressure during election time to define a political position, but maintaining its independence is critical to its success. By focusing on building an evidence base, however, the institution is able to navigate these political waters. In the words of Fernando Zavala, former Peruvian Minister of Economics and Finance, quoted in the institution's annual report, "GRADE has always known how to remain a wise, neutral and precise advisor."

But despite its size and successful trajectory, the institution hasn't been afraid to take advantage of the program's support to reinvent itself. The funding from the Initiative has allowed GRADE to lay out a communications and policy engagement strategy plan which, according to Dr. Benavides, has entailed "a major change in its institutional culture."

GRADE now has a Communication and Information Management Unit. This unit is streamlining different mechanisms through which GRADE researchers contribute to the public policy debate; it has improved the institution's communication tools such as its website, transformed GRADE's publications and supported a new series of policy seminars. GRADE is also providing incentives for research staff to disseminate their research outputs to a diverse set of policy actors.

With support from the Think Tank Initiative, GRADE is now taking a step towards becoming even more influential, by strategically exploring different pathways to policy change and further enhancing its own approaches.

THE SOUTH ASIAN COHORT



The policy research environment in South Asia, previously limited to traditional settings and institutions such as universities and government-funded organizations, has broadened considerably in recent times, allowing a wide range of diverse and independent institutions to emerge.

However, the political context in many parts of the region remains fraught. South Asian regimes are democratic, their media open and their economies private-sector driven. But, in too many places in the region bureaucracies are rigid and media unfriendly, and public institutions are very weak. This climate inhibits the implementation of well-designed policies. In addition, many South Asian think tanks face legal, migratory, and funding environments that openly discriminate against them.

While sharing a large number of contextual challenges with its South Asian neighbours, Indian think tanks stand apart. These institutions have been among the most influential in their country (and increasingly beyond) with long traditions of rigorous contributions to national economic policy. However, social science research in India, as elsewhere in the region, is in crisis today, primarily owing to very low levels of assured government funding, both in absolute terms and relative to natural and medical sciences, and to the neglect of higher education outside elite technical institutions. As well, while there has been a rise of Indian high-net-worth individuals, indigenous private trusts and foundations have shown little interest – with a few notable exceptions – in funding social science research in the country, investing abroad instead.

The 16 think tanks selected by the Think Tank Initiative in South Asia include some of the most dynamic and vibrant institutions in the region. The group is characterized by a significant diversity in institutional maturity, size, depth of networks, thematic scope of their work, and relative strengths ranging from research excellence to policy engagement. Collectively, they work on a wide variety of themes covering nearly all dimensions of social and economic policy, and do so in very diverse political and research settings. Many of them continue to innovate in order to address or circumvent the challenges they are facing.

ADVANCING A CAUSE

Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS), India

IIDS undertakes research and promotes informed debate to improve the lives of Indians who suffer from social exclusion due to their caste, ethnicity, gender, religion, physical handicap, or regional identity.

Established in 2003, IIDS was one of the first institutions in India to use interdisciplinarity to understand the nature, causes and consequences of collective discrimination and to suggest inclusive policies. Since then, IIDS has been “trying to systematically understand the various processes of exclusion and discrimination that have not been addressed so far by mainstream development economics,” as explained by Prof. Rajendra Mamgain, IIDS Director.

The institute has a long track record of contributing its knowledge and evidence to both policy-makers and to organizations leading civil society movements. The Indian government’s top-level policy statements purport to take account of inclusion and human rights, and the country has very clear legal, policy and development goals aiming at uplifting marginalized groups. But according to Prof. Mamgain, “there is still a huge development gap between marginalized groups and mainstream society, which is caused in part by an implementation problem in the delivery of public services.”

IIDS has recently completed a series of assessments of social sector programs, focusing particularly on the Scheduled Castes, who comprise around 16 per cent of the Indian population. Supported by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, the reports reviewed and provided in-depth recommendations for improving existing programs, such as scholarships for education. The institute has also led a comprehensive study on Dalit women’s rights and citizenship in India. The project intends to provide insight into the marginalization of Dalit women, in order to influence pro-active policies, strategies and legislation regarding their rights and entitlements.

Since IIDS undertakes research on relatively new areas, some of which have ideologically-charged policy implications, it faces the methodological challenge of developing appropriate research methods, design, and tools. The Think Tank Initiative has provided IIDS with an important opportunity to expand its capacity and reach in the above areas, and will continue to support the institution in speaking to a wider policy audience.

EXPANDING THE DEBATE

Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA), Sri Lanka

Established in 2001, CEPA seeks to inform and influence policy on poverty-related issues in Sri Lanka and the region. CEPA's research areas range from child poverty to resettlement, and from aid effectiveness to conflict.

One of CEPA's key tenets has always been inclusion. The institution strives to provide "the people's perspective" on national policy. In order to achieve this lofty goal, CEPA has become a pioneer in disseminating and providing access to evidence-based information and in increasing citizen's ability to take part in the debates which shape the lives of millions of Sri Lankans. In the words of Priyanthi Fernando, CEPA's Executive Director, "we all have a right to information on the issues that affect our lives."

The digital world provides new opportunities for CEPA in its quest to inform and influence. Using its own online platforms, such as the Poverty Portal, the Peace & Conflict Timeline, and the Poverty Blog, CEPA actively encourages the people of Sri Lanka and the region to add their voices to policy debates.

CEPA has also taken advantage of strategic opportunities to carry out commissioned work. In 2010, the institution completed a key report on child labour in Sri Lanka. Commissioned by the International Labour Organization (ILO), the report focused on how to introduce child labour issues into mainstream government policies and programs. The report was then used by the Ministry of Labour in the development of its plans to eradicate the worst forms of child labour in Sri Lanka.

As the case of CEPA points out, the credibility of a think tank and its ability to influence change depend not just on the quality of the research, but also on how this research is shared with policy actors and the wider public. Support from the Think Tank Initiative has enabled CEPA to both strengthen the capacity of its research team and to continue innovating in the way it communicates the results of its work.

The 51 think tanks supported by the Think Tank Initiative are committed to using research to inform and influence national social and economic policy debates. In the following pages, we explore the different areas of research that these institutions lead.

East Africa

Country	Institution	Research Areas	Themes
Ethiopia	Ethiopian Economic Association/ Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute (EEA/EEPRI)	Poverty; Human Development; Demography; Growth; Financial Sector; Agriculture	
	Ethiopian Development Research Institute (EDRI)	Urban Issues; Public Finance; Green Growth; Agriculture	
Kenya	Institute of Economic Affairs – Kenya (IEA Kenya)	Labour Market; Growth; Trade; Public Finance; Regulation	
	Institute of Policy Analysis and Research – Kenya (IPAR Kenya)	Public Finance; Accountability; Transparency; Governance; Human Capital	
	Kenya Institute for Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPRA)	Poverty; Labour Market; Trade; Energy; Food Security; Health; Education; Inequality	
Rwanda	Institute of Policy Analysis and Research – Rwanda (IPAR Rwanda)	Public Finance; Rural Development; Governance; Human Capital	
Tanzania	Economic and Social Research Foundation (ESRF)	Growth; Globalization; Regional Integration; Environmental Policies; Governance; Social Services	
	Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA)	Poverty; Growth; Environmental Policies; Agriculture; Governance; Science and Technology Policy; Social Protection; Gender	
	African Technology Policy Studies Network – Tanzania Chapter (ATPS Tanzania)	Foreign Direct Investment; Agriculture; Food Security; Information and Communication Technologies; Science and Technology Policy	
Uganda	Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE)	Oil Sector; Environmental Policies; Food Security; Land Policy; Governance; Health; Science and Technology Policy	
	Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC)	Labour Market; Growth; Trade; Climate Change; Public Spending; Governance; Social Protection	
	Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR)	Oil Sector; Land Policy; State Sovereignty; Sexuality	

Think Tank Initiative Institutions' Research Themes

 Development	 Governance
 Economics	 Health
 Environment & Natural Resources	 Information & Communication
 Evaluation	 Science & Technology
 Food & Agriculture	 Social Policy

West Africa

Country	Institution	Research Areas	Themes
Benin	Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IERPE)	Microfinance; Public Finance; Rural Development; Governance; Security and Justice; Health; Education	
Burkina Faso	Centre d'études, de documentation de recherche économiques et sociales (CEDRES)	Poverty; Public Finance; Environmental Policies; Rural Development; Governance; Social Protection	
Ghana	Institute of Economic Affairs – Ghana (IEA Ghana)	Growth; Macroeconomic Policy; Accountability; Transparency; Public Spending; Constitution	
	Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER)	National Development and Planning; Urban Issues; Oil Sector; Climate Change; Agriculture; Social and Collective Action; Health; Human Capital	
Mali	Groupe de recherche en économie appliquée et théorique (GREAT)	Poverty; Human Development; Growth; Macroeconomic Policy; Decentralization; Democracy; Health; Social Services	
Nigeria	Center for the Study of the Economies of Africa (CSEA)	National Development and Planning; Trade; Macroeconomic Policy; Oil Sector; Public Spending; Governance	
	Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED)	National Development and Planning; Conflict Management; Growth; Health; Education	
	African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE)	Growth; Competitiveness; Macroeconomic Policy; Agriculture	
	Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research (NISER)	Foreign Development Investment; Labour Market; Productivity; Growth; Governance; Education; Human Capital; Gender	
Senegal	Initiative prospective agricole et rurale (IPAR)	Demography; Labour Market; Environmental Policies; Agriculture; Land Policy; Migration	
	Consortium pour la recherche économique et sociale (CRES)	Growth; Regional Integration; Agriculture; Health; Education; Migration	

Think Tank Initiative Institutions' Research Themes

 Development	 Governance
 Economics	 Health
 Environment & Natural Resources	 Information & Communication
 Evaluation	 Science & Technology
 Food & Agriculture	 Social Policy

Latin America

Country	Institution	Research Areas	Themes
Bolivia	Fundación ARU	Poverty; Labour Market; Impact Evaluation; Energy; Inequality; Vulnerability; Inclusive Policies and Programmes; Minorities; Marginalized Groups	
	Instituto de Estudios Avanzados en Desarrollo (INESAD)	Sustainable Development; Labour Market; Growth; Public Finance; Impact Evaluation; Environmental Policies; Decentralization; Education	
Ecuador	Centro Ecuatoriano de Derecho Ambiental (CEDA)	Natural Resource Conflict Management; Climate Change; Energy; Accountability; Governance	
	Fundación para el Avance de las Reformas y las Oportunidades (Grupo FARO)	Environmental Policies; Governance; Health; Education; Information and Communication Technologies	
El Salvador	Fundación Dr. Guillermo Manuel Ungo (FUNDAUNGO)	Financing Development; Demography; Public Finance; Governance; Citizenship; Education; Social Protection	
	Fundación Salvadoreña para el Desarrollo Económico y Social / Departamento de Estudios Económicos y Sociales (FUSADES/DEES)	Productivity; Growth; Macroeconomic Policy; Environmental Policies; Impact Evaluation; Social Protection	
Guatemala	Asociación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales (ASIES)	Labour Market; Macroeconomic Policy; Security and Justice; Education	
Honduras	Foro Social de Deuda Externa y Desarrollo de Honduras (FOSDEH)	Regional Development; International Cooperation/Relations; Trade; Public Finance; Budget Analysis/Responsiveness	
Paraguay	Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía Paraguaya (CADEP)	Poverty; Regional Development; Labour Market; Growth; Trade; Competitiveness; Regional Integration; Public Finance; Public Administration Reforms	
	Instituto Desarrollo	National Development and Planning; Education	
Peru	Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE)	Poverty; Labour Market; Environmental Policies; Impact Evaluation; Rural Development; Public Administration Reforms; Health; Education	
	Instituto de Estudios Peruanos (IEP)	Poverty; Demography; Rural Development; Democracy; Citizenship; Education; Information and Communication Technologies; Culture	

Think Tank Initiative Institutions' Research Themes

 Development	 Governance
 Economics	 Health
 Environment & Natural Resources	 Information & Communication
 Evaluation	 Science & Technology
 Food & Agriculture	 Social Policy























South Asia

Country	Institution	Research Areas	Themes
Bangladesh	Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)	Poverty; Trade; Investment Policies; Macroeconomic Policy; Climate Change; Environmental Policies; Agriculture; Rural Development; Social Protection	Development Economics Environment & Natural Resources Social Policy
	Institute of Governance Studies (IGS)	Governance; Decentralization; Democracy; Accountability	Governance
India	Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP)	Infrastructure; Disaster Management; Environmental Policies; Energy; Security and Justice; Information and Communication Technologies	Development Environment & Natural Resources Information & Communication
	Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA)	Public Finance; Agriculture; Transparency; Public Spending; Budget Analysis / Responsiveness	Economics Environment & Natural Resources Governance
	Centre for Policy Research (CPR)	Urban Issues; International Cooperation/ Relations; Macroeconomic Policy; Climate Change; Regulation; Social Services	Development Economics Environment & Natural Resources Governance Social Policy
	Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS)	Urban Issues; Democracy; Religion and Secularism; Media, Information and Society; Education; Minorities	Development Governance Health Social Policy
	Indian Institute of Dalit Studies (IIDS)	Development Studies; Religion and Secularism; Social and Collective Action; Inclusive Policies and Programmes; Marginalized Groups; Gender	Development Governance Social Policy
	Institute of Economic Growth (IEG)	Demography; Labour Market; Trade; Globalization; Macroeconomic Policy; Informal Sector; Environmental Policies; Agriculture; Social Change	Development Economics Environment & Natural Resources Social Policy
	Institute of Rural Management (IRMA)	Poverty; Labour Market; Productivity; Growth; Climate Change; Disaster Management; Agriculture; Rural Development; Decentralization; Inequality	Development Economics Environment & Natural Resources Governance Social Policy
	National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)	Poverty; Macroeconomic Policy; Growth; Trade; Investment Policies; Informal Sector; Agriculture; Rural Development; Gender	Development Economics Environment & Natural Resources Social Policy
	Public Affairs Centre (PAC)	Urban Issues; Climate Change; Governance; Public Administration Reforms; Democracy	Development Environment & Natural Resources Governance

Think Tank Initiative Institutions' Research Themes

Development	Governance
Economics	Health
Environment & Natural Resources	Information & Communication
Evaluation	Science & Technology
Food & Agriculture	Social Policy

South Asia *(continued)*

Country	Institution	Research Areas	Themes
Nepal	Institute for Social and Environmental Transition – Nepal (ISET-N)	Development Studies; Foreign Aid; Climate Change; Disaster Management; Water Management; Forest Management; Food Security; Governance	   
Pakistan	Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC)	Poverty; Labour Market; Macroeconomic Policy; Public Finance; Governance; Gender	   
	Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI)	Labour Market; Macroeconomic Policy; Climate Change; Energy; Food Security; Education; Gender	    
Sri Lanka	Centre for Poverty Analysis (CEPA)	Poverty; Infrastructure; Climate Change; Environmental Policies; Impact Evaluation; Post-Conflict Issues; Migration; Vulnerability	    
	Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS)	Growth; Trade; Macroeconomic Policy; Public Finance; Food Security; Post-Conflict Issues; Social Protection	   

Think Tank Initiative Institutions' Research Themes

 Development	 Governance
 Economics	 Health
 Environment & Natural Resources	 Information & Communication
 Evaluation	 Science & Technology
 Food & Agriculture	 Social Policy

THINK TANKS: AT WORK

Contributing to stronger policy responses to the most challenging social and economic problems in their countries.

SUPPORTING POLICY RESEARCH

The previous pages attest to the wide nature of the think tanks funded by the Think Tank Initiative and the key issues they tackle in their countries. The program is working away from the limelight with these institutions to support their efforts.

In the past two years, and beyond the core funding provided, the Initiative's ongoing monitoring and mentoring has enabled the think tanks to carry out long-term strategic planning, establish their own research priorities and begin to consolidate themselves as stable organizations.

The following are some of the ways the Initiative worked with its funded institutions in the fiscal year 2010-2011:

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

Core financial support on its own may not allow think tanks to address key institutional challenges. Therefore a defining feature of the Think Tank Initiative is the provision of core grants *as well as* dedicated technical support *and* frequent interaction between the program team and the institution's staff.

At the beginning of a grant a direct dialogue is established between the institution's Executive Director and senior staff, and the respective Program Officer. Ambitious yet realistic institutional objectives are set early on and recorded in a grant agreement, which forms the basis for continued interaction and monitoring of the progress of the institution.

Program Officers also work with the think tanks to strengthen their ability to monitor their own progress. Moreover, the Initiative's introduction of systematic ways to track progress indicators has influenced the trajectory of a number of the institutions – in terms of how they carry out their institutional planning, how they structure staffing, and on how they focus their own internal monitoring efforts. Many institutions view this as a direct benefit of the program funding.

In 2010-2011 the Initiative funded a peer review of selected research from all of the Latin American and South Asian institutions (in addition to that carried out in East and West Africa in 2009-2010); this was undertaken as part of an assessment of the scope and quality of their current research programs.

The Initiative also carried out a survey of policy actors in the 23 participating countries to assess how they had used the research by the think tanks funded by the program and by other policy research institutions (see insert next page).

ASSESSING THE DEMAND

What kind of information do national policy actors need, and how do they access it? What are their perceptions of the quality, value and availability of research findings produced by think tanks (in general, and specifically those funded by the Think Tank Initiative)?

To help answer questions such as these, the Initiative undertook a Policy Community Survey between 2009 and 2011 in all countries in Africa, South Asia and Latin America where the program is engaged. The near one thousand respondents included senior level active members of the national policy community.

The survey found that in South Asia and Latin America, think tanks are among the most frequently used sources of information that stakeholders draw upon for evidence. In comparison, think tanks are much less used by African stakeholders, who are more likely to rely on relevant government ministries and international agencies for their information needs.

In each region, think tanks, along with international agencies and university research institutes, consistently top the list in terms of quality of research. This suggests that think tanks have a real opportunity to seize, given that the value of their work is perceived, generally, to be of relevance.

However, the survey also suggests that these institutions need to review the way in which they disseminate their findings and engage in policy dialogue. For this they need to take into account the preferences among policy actors for user-driven and self-directed forms of information exchange (such as databases, electronic publications, and print publications and reports) over online forums and consulting advice.

The results of the survey also included perceptions on each of the 51 funded institutions. These were shared individually with each think tank and have proven valuable in their internal assessments of how to better engage with policy actors.

This exercise will help create a benchmark for future surveys to detect changes in the policy-making community and perceptions of think tanks in select countries; and to help understand the success of each organization within its own environment. The Initiative hopes to build upon this exercise and carry out quantitative and qualitative research to develop a better understanding of policy-making communities in specific countries, and to provide strategic direction to think tanks on how they can best contribute to the quality of policy-making in countries where they operate.

These tools have provided information on the research quality and policy engagement of each of the institutions. This data, together with other institutional information, identifies opportunities and areas of improvement, and serves as a baseline for each organization to track its own progress – and that of the program itself. All this vast information is captured in an online database that will soon be accessible to the institutions so that they can better monitor their own progress as well as carry out their own research on the role of policy research institutions.

Evaluating the Program's Contribution

Evaluations usually take place at the end of an intervention, but the Think Tank Initiative's own evaluation is starting now, during the program's early stages, in order to be a source of "real-time" feedback, helping to strengthen the Initiative's impact as it is being implemented and shaping the design of its next phase.

The findings of the evaluation will be made publicly available, with the hope that they will also help inform the design of other projects and programs aimed at strengthening think tanks and policy research institutions. At 0.6% of the total program budget, this exercise is well on par with best evaluation practices.

Cross-Cutting Activities

Facilitating Peer Exchange

The institutions supported by the program thrive on sharing their questions, learnings, results and best practices with each other. The Initiative aims at providing platforms for exchange, virtual and in person.

In 2010, the program facilitated two large-scale meetings with funded institutions. The first was held in Buenos Aires with the Latin American Cohort, and the second in Neemrana, India, with the South Asian think tanks. The institutions came together to discuss issues, challenges and innovations in policy research in their regions.

In India, the Initiative organized a panel discussion to feature several prominent speakers, who reflected on innovations and challenges in the South Asia policy research environment and engaged with an audience that included members of the research, donor, media, and the policy-making community in Delhi. This panel sparked a continued engagement between the Delhi-based funded think tanks, donors, and India's Planning Commission on how to best support Indian policy research institutions.

All funded institutions share an online space where they exchange information and discuss ideas.

Making the Case for Core Support

One of the main aspirations of the program is to influence the funding practices of large international donors in order to strengthen local think tanks, and to convince both policy-makers in developing countries and regional and international financial institutions to fund and use the work of local think tanks in order to craft smart development policies.

Through media appearances, radio interviews, participation in conferences, bilateral meetings and more, the Think Tank Initiative staff, international advisors and donors are constantly making the case to key international stakeholders on the importance of high-quality local research for successful national policy-making.

In the last year, the program was profiled in the media over 70 times, including an opinion piece authored by IDRC's president David Malone that was part of a well-documented debate in South Asia on how to best support policy research organizations.

Technical Support

Supporting Capacity-Building Activities

The Think Tank Initiative aims to support its funded think tanks in increasing their capacity to carry out robust high-quality research, to engage more efficiently with different policy actors and to improve the functioning and performance of their institutions. Since some areas of support are of common interest to a number of institutions, the Initiative is able to channel its resources to organize group capacity-building activities, making more efficient use of funds.

In 2010-2011, the Initiative led the following capacity-building activities:

Evaluative Thinking

In the meetings held with the Latin American and South Asian institutions, time was allocated to discuss the importance of evaluative thinking within their organizations and how it can promote research quality, effective policy influence and the development of a strategic approach to research. The sessions provided a series of concepts, practices, methods and tools that were helpful for the elaboration of an institutional monitoring and evaluation strategy. The groups also explored ways in which evaluative thinking can enhance some key organizational performance areas, including leadership, incentivization, and motivation of staff.

Impact Evaluation

There is a global movement, largely driven by Northern institutions, to better understand and measure the results of development interventions. The Think Tank Initiative believes that Southern think tanks should be part of further defining this space. In the last year, the Initiative collaborated with the *Agence française de développement* (AFD) on a scoping study of existing capacities in Africa in the field of impact evaluation. A workshop was then organized in Benin, hosted by the Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IERPE), to discuss the findings of this study and to generate proposals and strategies for moving this field forward in the region. Similarly, the Initiative provided financial support to the Latin American institutions to attend the International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie) conference in Cuernavaca, Mexico in June 2011. These events are a first step toward building the local capacity of Southern think tanks in this field.

THE YEAR **AHEAD**

In the fiscal year 2011-2012, the Think Tank Initiative will continue to focus on supporting its funded institutions through dedicated technical support. Three specific areas will be addressed, as per the think tanks' priorities: Policy Engagement and Communication, Resource Mobilization and Governance.

Because engaging and communicating with policy actors and citizens is an integral dimension of the work of think tanks, the Initiative will provide a dedicated line of support to institutions in this area. This assistance will focus on their individual institutional needs and contexts, but will also emphasize collaboration between think tanks where common synergies are identified.

In terms of Resource Mobilization, the program will organize a series of workshops whose aim is to strengthen the capacity of all its funded institutions in successful Resource Mobilization, thus contributing to ensure their long-term sustainability. As the first step, the workshops will familiarize participants with the different tools and skills needed to develop an effective Resource Mobilization strategy. As a second step, the program will work with the institutions as they develop and implement their strategies.

The Initiative will also work with the institutions towards more effective corporate governance by helping them strengthen their internal administration, their accountability systems and their boards.

In addition to helping funded institutions further build their capacity, another priority for the Think Tank Initiative is to work with them, and others, on developing a robust and meaningful research agenda focused on the role that policy research institutions play in the formulation of policy in developing countries.

Towards Cape Town 2012...

In June 2012, The Think Tank Initiative is convening all of its funded think tanks, donors and advisors in Cape Town, South Africa. The aim of this exchange is to generate knowledge and share good practices in the various strategies used by successful policy research institutions.

The Initiative hopes that this gathering will enable institutions to identify ways in which they can work better, as well as help participants assess the implications for program (and other donor) support to policy research institutions.

This event also responds directly to the desire of the 51 funded institutions to meet as a global group to share their experience, knowledge and practices.

THE THINK TANK INITIATIVE TEAM

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Rebeca Grynspan – Costa Rica

UN Under-Secretary-General and UNDP Associate Administrator

Louis Kasekende – Uganda

Deputy Governor of the Bank of Uganda, Uganda

Rakesh Mohan – India

Professor, School of Management;
Senior Fellow, Yale University

Maureen O'Neil – Canada

President, Canadian Health Services Research Foundation

Marie-Angélique Savané – Senegal

International Consultant; former Chair of the Panel of Eminent Persons for the African Peer Review Mechanism in Senegal

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William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

Smita Singh – Program Director, Global Development and Population Program¹

Linda Frey – Program Officer, Global Development and Population Program

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Kimberly Hamilton – Deputy Director, Policy and Advocacy, Global Development Program

Oliver Babson – Senior Program Officer, Global Development Program

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Peter Evans – Senior Governance Adviser, DFID India

Ian Shapiro – Head, Maturing States and Partnerships Team

Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS)

Armand Evers – Senior Policy Advisor

International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Rohinton Medhora – Vice-President, Programs

Sue Szabo – Director, Social and Economic Policy

¹ Ruth Levine was appointed to this post in May 2011.

THE THINK TANK INITIATIVE

DONORS

About the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

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

Learn more at www.hewlett.org

About the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, it focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, it seeks to ensure that all people – especially those with the fewest resources – have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life.

Learn more at www.gatesfoundation.org

About the UK Department for International Development (DFID)

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

Learn more at www.dfid.gov.uk

About the Netherlands Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS)

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

Learn more at www.minbuza.nl/en

About the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

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

Learn more at www.idrc.ca

FINANCIAL SUMMARY

	Dec 2007 - Mar 2009	Apr 2009 - Mar 2010	Apr 2010 - Mar 2011
Contributions	2,136,173	9,284,824	20,158,103
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	119,812	1,823,166	8,251,126
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation		6,274,614	8,590,326
DFID			1,232,780
DGIS			1,020,515
International Development Research Centre	2,016,361	1,187,044	1,063,356
Expenditures	2,136,173	9,284,824	20,158,103
Application and Selection Process	368,217	123,074	57,486
Monitoring and Evaluation	43,154	164,703	532,728
Research Expenses			
– Institutional Grants		5,642,986	14,763,122
– Cross-cutting Activities ¹	212,991	511,344	441,122
Technical Support and Administrative Costs	1,511,811	2,842,717	4,363,645
Research Expenses by Region	212,991	6,154,330	15,204,244
East Africa		3,156,758	3,661,432
West Africa		2,694,367	3,485,628
South Asia		95,401	4,282,273
Latin America		77,439	3,661,676
Global ²	212,991 ³	130,365	113,235

¹ This includes Organizational Development program funds, and Learning, Synthesis, Publication and Networking.

² Activities carried out in more than one region.

³ Expenses during this period were not broken down by region.

THINK TANKS AT WORK

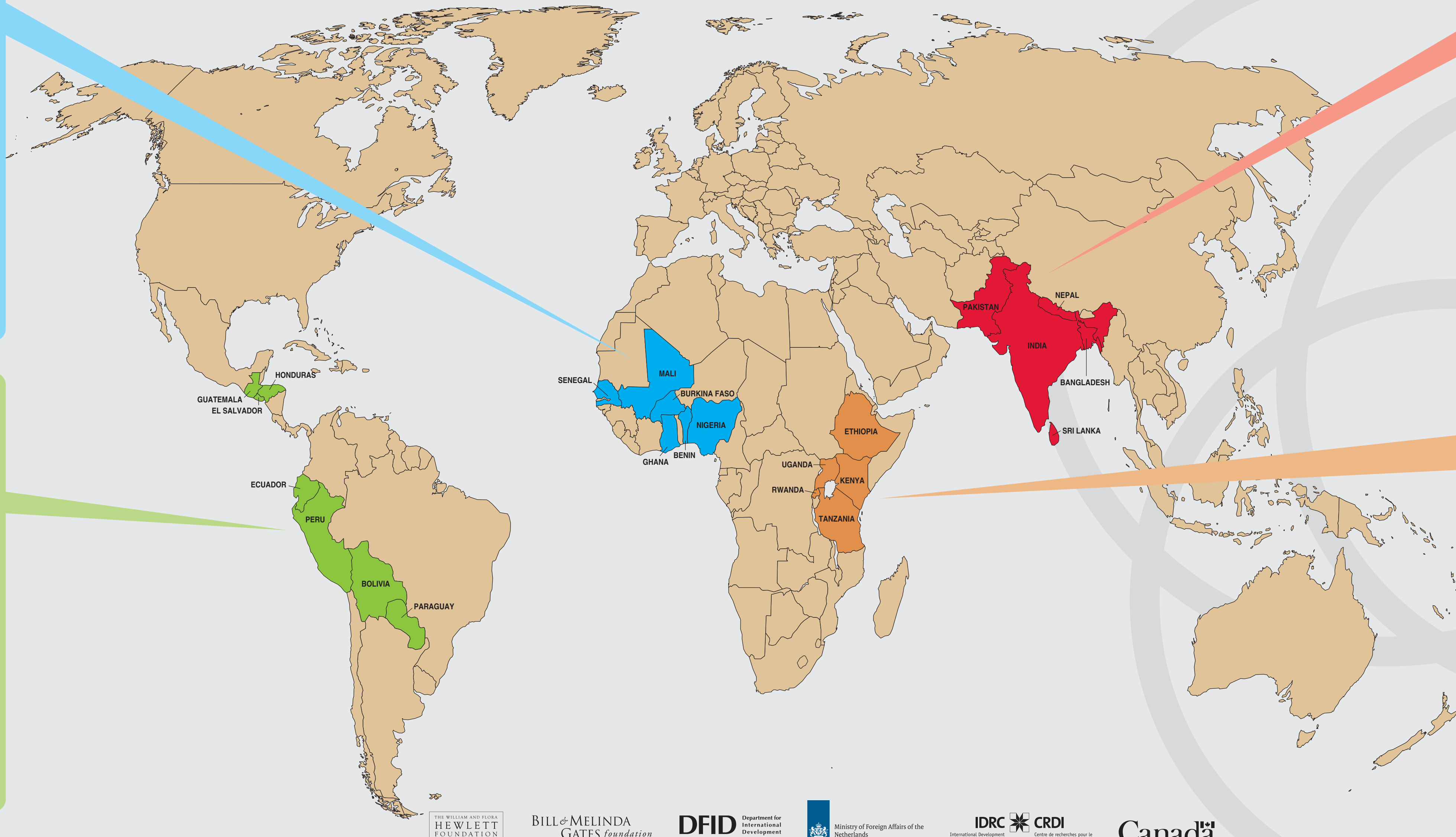
WEST AFRICA

- The work of the **Institute for Empirical Research in Political Economy (IERPE)** led the Ministry of Education in Benin to take action in improving the quality of maternal and primary schooling.
- The research of the **Centre d'études, de documentation de recherche économiques et sociales (CEDRES)** has supported a change in the taxation law on rice in Burkina Faso, reducing the price of this important commodity.
- The flagship business environment research of the **African Institute for Applied Economics (AIAE)** is influencing policy and institutional reforms for reducing the cost and difficulty of doing business across the States of Nigeria.
- The **Centre for Population and Environmental Development (CPED)** is working with local indigenous communities in the fragile and conflict-ridden Niger Delta region in their implementation of development programs.
- The **Initiative prospective agricole et rurale (IPAR)** is informing the debate on agricultural policies and unemployment in Senegal.
- Recommendations from the **Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER)** on maternal health have been adopted by the Ghana Health Service resulting in the reduction of the abortion mortality rate in Ghana.

LATIN AMERICA

- **Fundación ARU's** research on ethnic and racial inequalities is informing the dialogue between Bolivian civil society and the government on policies against racism and ethnic discrimination.
- **Grupo FARO** is fostering debate on the future of Ecuadorian policy regarding education reform, knowledge generation, innovation and the economy.
- Research on tax equity from the **Foro Social de Deuda Externa y Desarrollo de Honduras (FOSDEH)** is a key source of expertise in the national debate in Honduras on fiscal policies.
- The **Centro de Análisis y Difusión de la Economía Paraguaya (CADEP)** is empowering civil society in Paraguay through a "Fiscal Observatory" that is boosting citizen participation in the monitoring of public expenditures and revenues.
- The **Asociación de Investigación y Estudios Sociales (ASIES)** is driving a constitutional amendment in Guatemala to extend the term of judges and the Supreme Court President's from one year to ten, in order to promote stability and efficiency in the judiciary.

The Think Tank Initiative supports 51 independent policy research institutions in the developing world. See how some of these think tanks have contributed in 2011 to stronger policy responses to the most challenging social and economic problems in their countries. For more information, please visit: www.idrc.ca/thinktank



SOUTH ASIA

- The **Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)** is researching how Bangladesh's rising inflation is affecting purchasing power, income distribution and poverty levels.
- Research from the **Center for Study of Science, Technology and Policy (CSTEP)** on sustainable energy and improved infrastructure has contributed to the development of 'Smart Smaller Towns' to decongest India's large cities.
- The **Public Affairs Centre (PAC)** is enhancing people's power to hold governments accountable through citizen-centric tools for assessing governance, including its pioneering, and recently improved, Citizen Report Cards.
- The **Institute for Social and Environmental Transition – Nepal (ISET-N)** is working to reduce the vulnerability of the poor to climate change.
- The **Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC)** is providing advisory and technical assistance to the government to adopt gender responsive budgeting at national, provincial and district levels.
- The **Institute of Policy Studies of Sri Lanka (IPS)** is influencing national policy strategies to bridge growth disparities in post-conflict Sri Lanka and bring about the economic integration of conflict-affected communities.

EAST AFRICA

- The **Ethiopian Economic Association/Ethiopian Economic Policy Research Institute (EEA/EEPRI)** is working with one of the nine ethnic divisions in Ethiopia (the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region) to improve its revenue generating capacity.
- The **Institute of Economic Affairs (IEA)** influenced the design of the Kenya Competition Bill 2009, and is now assessing its implications for market competition in the country.
- The Afrobarometer survey results of **Research on Poverty Alleviation (REPOA)** influenced the Tanzanian government to take the lead in speaking out against corruption and solicit ideas on strategies to curb it.
- The **Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC)** contributed to the East African Community (EAC) negotiation of the East African Monetary Union (EAMU) Protocol.
- The **African Technology Policy Studies Network – Tanzania Chapter (ATPS-Tanzania)** is playing a proactive role in advocating for a broad approach to investment in science and technology (S&T) in the country beyond engineering and bio-sciences.