

KNOWLEDGE SERVICES

IDS Knowledge Services

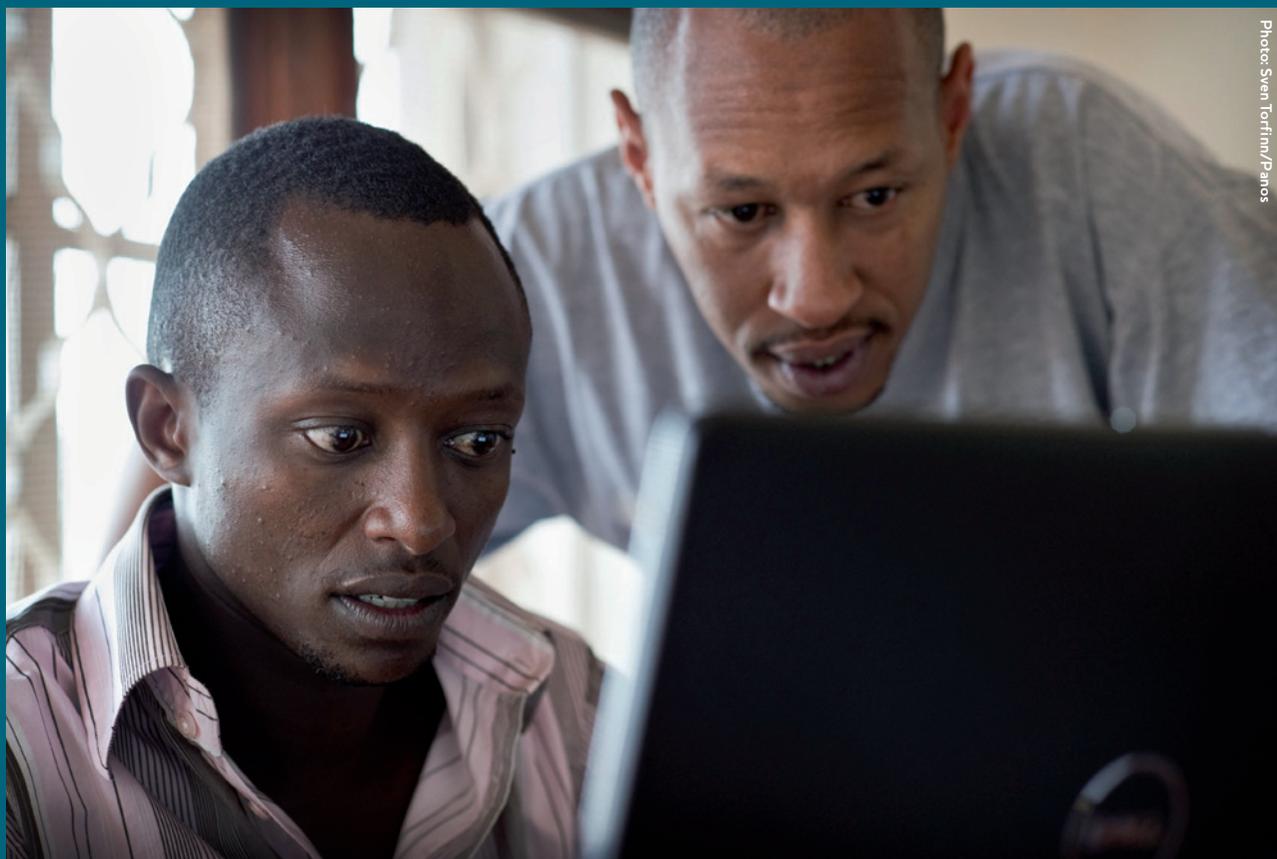


Photo: Sven Torfinn/Panos

HIGHLIGHTS ▼

IDS Knowledge Services aim 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 intermediaries, focusing on development research, policy and practice. We have built our expertise in this area through established information services such as BRIDGE and Eldis. Acknowledging that it takes more than information access to support evidence-based decisions in policy and practice, we have also been collaborating with partners in the South to develop products and services tailored to local needs and demand.

Over the last year, we have consolidated and expanded our existing partnership work with the Arid Lands Information Network in Kenya, D.Net in Bangladesh and the Malawi Development Exchange, whilst also pursuing opportunities with new partners. These include working with the Ghana Community Radio Network on new knowledge products and working with Fundaexpresión in Colombia on gender and climate issues. We are also engaging with new partners and knowledge networks in India, Uganda and South Africa.

LINKING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES: LAUNCH OF THE KNOWLEDGE BROKERS' FORUM

Knowledge brokers (KBs) and intermediaries are seen as increasingly important in the promotion and uptake of evidence-based decision-making in development. However, flows of information between KBs working in different geographical locations and sectors are weak; lessons and good practise are rarely exchanged. Efforts are frequently duplicated, newcomers to the field are not able to draw on others for support, and there is a lack of platforms by which these actors can engage and learn from one another.

To address these issues, IDS Knowledge Services and seven other members of the IKMediary Network developed an interactive website aimed at knowledge brokers and information intermediaries. The Knowledge Brokers' Forum (KBF) supports discussions and resource-sharing which help to identify good practice in the field and strengthen the collective capacity and impact of this important community.

Since its launch in September 2010, KBF has attracted over 300 members from 63 countries. This new global community has been actively developing a shared understanding around the concept and practice of knowledge brokering by exchanging resources and experiences. KBF has made it easier for people to access peer support and learn more about how to play this role in different contexts and settings.

www.knowledgebrokersforum.org

LINKING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES: LESSONS FROM AFRICA AND SOUTH ASIA IN DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTION

IDS Knowledge Services co-produces the briefing series *Joto Afrika* with the Arid Land Information Network (ALIN) in Kenya and the *Protifolon* series with the Development Research Network (D.Net) in Bangladesh. Following discussions we recognised the possibility of linking our Kenyan and Bangladeshi colleagues to encourage them to jointly explore a key development issue pertinent to both locales. This led to the simultaneous production of issues of *Joto Afrika* and *Protifolon* on the theme of disaster risk management and climate change adaptation, reflecting African and South Asian perspectives. This illustrates how Knowledge Services is increasingly playing a convening role, bringing together Southern partners, supporting debate around shared development issues, encouraging lesson-sharing and enabling co-production opportunities.

Helping people understand and make sense of the complexities and realities of poverty and inequality by drawing on quality research from around the world.

VIEWPOINT ▼



Photo: Mikkel Oestergaard/Panos

EXAMPLES OF OUR WORK PRODUCED IN PARTNERSHIP

Eldis Community

A free online community for those involved in international development with interactive tools that enable members to discuss issues and share resources. Eldis Community supports IDS projects including: ALINe Farmer Voice, China Low Carbon Platform, the Community-Based Adaptation Exchange and ENDA Communities. <http://community.eldis.org>

Governance and Social Development Resource Centre (GSDRC)

IDS is a partner in the Governance and Social Development Research Centre which aims to provide access to the best thinking on governance, conflict and social development. www.gsdrc.org

Joto Afrika

Produced in partnership with the Arid Lands Information Network (ALIN), Kenya, and the AfricaAdapt Network, *Joto Afrika* is a series of printed briefings and online resources concerning adaptation to climate change in sub-Saharan Africa. <http://alin.net/Joto20Afrika>

Malawi Development Exchange

Delivered in partnership with the National Library of Malawi, the Malawi Development Exchange supports those interested in Malawian development issues, helping them to participate in discussions, share research and collaborate in communicating development knowledge produced in Malawi. <http://community.eldis.org/malawi>

Protifolon

Protifolon is a briefing series highlighting research from Bangladesh produced in collaboration with the Development Research Network (D.Net), Bangladesh. www.bdresearch.org/protifolon

BASIL JONES, PRINCIPAL INSTITUTIONAL & CAPACITY BUILDING EXPERT, AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP, TUNISIA

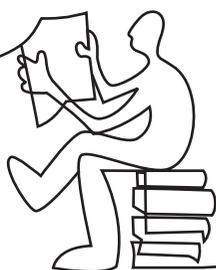
Fortunately for me I came across the Knowledge Broker's Forum as I was writing a paper on the role of a multilateral development bank as a knowledge broker. The African Development Bank could play a more consistent role as a knowledge broker and Convenor of experts and policymakers and facilitator of African voice/consensus.

MASUM BILLAH, RESEARCH FELLOW, D.NET (DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH NETWORK), BANGLADESH

IDS Knowledge Services visited D.Net for three months in 2009, where they trained our team in research communication methods and processes. This allowed us to initiate a policy brief series, *Protifolon*, which is now on its fifth issue.

I was able to further develop my skills last year when I was invited to work with them at IDS for two months. During this time I was trained in many innovative knowledge management tools, which has enabled me to restructure our web portal and make it more useful for Bangladeshi users.

Through my interaction with IDS colleagues, I have not only gained professionally but have also made lifelong friendships.



THE BRITISH LIBRARY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

The British Library for Development Studies (BLDS) contains the largest collection of economic and social development materials in Europe, consisting of one million items. It is singular among European libraries in that over half of this collection originates from the global South.

HIGHLIGHTS ▼

LINKING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES: RAISING THE PROFILE OF SOUTHERN DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH BY MAKING IT ACCESSIBLE TO AN INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE

Much of the research originating from the South does not reach a global audience as a result of limited digital and online availability. Last year, to redress this, we developed and launched a unique global repository that highlights this research and includes material not previously available in digital format and online. In the first year of the project we incorporated collections from institutes in Kenya, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe, making over 1,000 pieces of research available to a global audience.

LINKING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES: STRENGTHENING THE CAPACITY OF PEOPLE WORKING IN DEVELOPMENT TO FIND AND USE RESEARCH INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY

We have worked in partnership with the Information Training Outreach Centre for Africa and Cornell University's Mann Library to develop and pilot a 'training of trainers' course focusing on information literacy. The course was a radical departure from traditional classroom approaches with its emphasis on participatory learning, evaluation impact and assessing institutional capacity. Feedback from participants showed that building institutional capacity was key to supporting information literacy programmes, so we designed and ran four courses in this area, and convened an Africa-wide event to share learning on this.

VIEWPOINT ▼

GRACIAN CHIMWAZA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INFORMATION TRAINING AND OUTREACH CENTRE FOR AFRICA (ITOCA)

For the past 12 years ITOCA has trained researchers, educators, and practitioners throughout Africa on finding quality, up-to-date materials using online development resources such as Research4Life and TEEAL. Last year we collaborated with the British Library for Development Studies on strengthening the content and delivery of the training courses, with very encouraging results. Course attendees and facilitators alike found the new participative approaches to be an effective and empowering way to learn online search skills that make a difference in their day-to-day work. Overall, this collaboration has had a considerable positive impact on the way we impart knowledge and skills in our courses.