

# SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH SYSTEMS

*Investigating the challenges of  
doing research in developing countries*

## About the Program

The production, diffusion and use of locally-grounded social science research is key to democratic debate and planning for sustainable development. The Global Development Network (GDN) has launched an innovative program to investigate the challenges of doing quality social-science research in developing countries. Informed by a two-year pilot in 11 countries (2014-2016), this program partners with national research institutions in developing countries to assess local social science research systems.

Building on the current discourse on knowledge systems, the program puts forward a full-fledged definition of what a research system is, and operationalizes it to investigate the national environment for social science research in three main dimensions: context, actors, and systemic features.

Assessments are completed by applying the Doing Research Assessment tool, i.e., a method for systematically analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, challenges and bottlenecks that affect quality and policy-relevant social science research. The program represents an innovative opportunity to learn about, and act on, the status and future of social sciences in developing countries.

The program is structured in three interrelated steps: implementing the Doing Research Assessments at the national level; curating a global dataset and analytical benchmarking of research systems; and developing practical resources to support action on strengthening research systems. The program will produce both national and global reports, all datasets will be available in open access, and all outputs will be translated in accessible outreach material to support awareness and action on social science research.

Doing Research Assessments are underway in 2020 in Bolivia, El Salvador, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nigeria and Venezuela. GDN is competitively identifying, on a rolling basis, additional institutions and funding to implement them in more developing countries.

The pilot was conducted in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, India, Indonesia, Niger, Paraguay, Peru and South Africa.

*See advisors and national focal points overleaf*

### Program

Doing Research:  
Assessing & Benchmarking  
Social Science Research Systems

### Pilot Funding

US\$ 785,000 from the  
Bill & Melinda Gates  
Foundation, Agence  
Française de Développement,  
French Ministry of Foreign Affairs  
and International Development,  
and Swiss Agency for  
Development Cooperation

### Scale-up Funding

US\$ 162,436 from the  
International Development  
Research Centre

### Location

Bolivia, El Salvador,  
Indonesia, Myanmar,  
Nigeria and Venezuela

### Duration

2014 - 2016 | Pilot  
2017 onwards | Scale up in  
developing countries

# Global Advisory Committee

- ✓ Fred Carden, Founder, Using Evidence and Former Director - Evaluation, International Development Research Centre
- ✓ Anindya Chatterjee, Regional Director Asia, International Development Research Centre
- ✓ Shanta Devarajan, Senior Director for Development Economics (DEC), World Bank
- ✓ Gargee Ghosh, Director, Development Policy & Finance, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- ✓ Patrick Guillaumont, President, Foundation for Studies and Research on International Development (FERDI)
- ✓ Heide Hackmann, Chief Executive Officer, International Science Council
- ✓ Fabian Käser, Executive Secretary, House of Academics, Sciences Switzerland (KFPE)
- ✓ Lynn V. Meek, Professor, University of Melbourne and Founder, LH Martin Institute
- ✓ Eunice Muthengi, Deputy Head, Department for International Development (DFID) East Africa Research Hub
- ✓ Aleko Sarris, Emeritus Professor, Department of Economics, University of Athens
- ✓ Nelson Torto, Executive Director, African Academy of Sciences
- ✓ James Wilsdon, Vice-Chair, International Network for Government Science Advice and Professor, Research Policy, Sheffield University

For more information, including Doing Research national focal points, country reports and webinars, visit

[www.gdn.int/dr](http://www.gdn.int/dr)