

CHALLENGES & SUCCESSES OF DOING RESEARCH IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH SYSTEMS



FACT SHEET

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. The Doing Research program represents an innovative opportunity to learn about, and act on, the status and future of social sciences in developing countries.

Pilot

Informed by a two-year pilot in 11 countries (2014-2016), Doing Research partners with national research institutions in developing countries to assess local social science research systems. The pilot was conducted in Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, Cameroon, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Niger, Paraguay, Peru and South Africa.

Proof of Concept & Scale Up

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 dimensions: context, actors, and systemic features. Recent countries of implementation include Bolivia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nigeria and El Salvador.

PROGRAM

Doing Research: Assessing & Benchmarking Social Science Research Systems

TIMELINE

2014 - 2016 Pilot

Bangladesh, Bolivia, Cambodia, Cameroon, India, Indonesia, Ivory Coast, Niger, Paraguay, Peru and South Africa

2018 - 2020 Proof of concept

DRA in Bolivia, Indonesia, Myanmar, Nigeria, and Preliminary DRA in Venezuela

2021-2026 Scale up

El Salvador, DRAs in Francophone Africa during 2022

How the program works

The Doing Research program is implemented and developed through a network of Southern 'research on research' scholars spanning 30 countries (early 2021), and is growing.

Assessments are completed by adapting the Doing Research Assessment (DRA) framework, i.e., a method for systematically analyzing the strengths, weaknesses, challenges, and bottlenecks that affect quality and policy-relevant social science research.

The program is structured in three interrelated steps:

- implementing DRAs at the national level
- curating a global dataset and analytical benchmarking of research systems
- developing practical resources to support action on strengthening research systems

The program produces 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.

Partnerships

National research institutions can apply to become National Focal Points for the program, joining hands with GDN to implement the Doing Research Assessment. GDN partners with National Focal Points to create an early demand for the studies, secure resources, adapt the methodology, analyze the data and disseminate it. GDN also partners with national teams of projects that look into the role of social sciences systems in development outside of the implementation of the DR Assessment.

Partnerships can take different forms, based on the context, and are supported by a core global team, which centralizes country-level inputs for the development of the DRA methodology and global DRA dataset for the program, and provides backstopping support throughout the implementation.

We invite donors to support the expansion of the Doing Research program. Interested parties should contact Francesco Obino (fobino@gdn.int). Other questions about the program should be directed to doingresearch@gdn.int.

FUNDING

Pilot 2014 - 2016

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

Proof of concept 2018 - 2020

US\$221,894 from GDN Core Funds and US\$192,763 from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC)

Scale up 2021-2026

€500,000 from the Agence Française de Développement

SPECIAL PROJECTS

International Network for Advancing Science and Policy (INASP) | COVID-19 and Research Systems Observatory

Asia Research Center, Universitas Indonesia | Social Sciences and COVID-19 responses in ASEAN project sponsored by the IDRC