



International
Growth Centre

Annual Report 2015–2016



DIRECTED BY



The International Growth Centre (IGC) aims to promote sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice based on frontier research.

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Jonathan Leape analyses the impressive performance of the IGC over the last year, and charts the way forward.

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Promoting sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice based on frontier research.

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The IGC is led by a Steering Group of top researchers from around the world.

“ *Empowering countries to strengthen their growth fundamentals has acquired a new urgency as key drivers of growth have collapsed.* ”

At the 2015 IGC Africa Growth Forum in Addis Ababa, Dr. Arkebe Oqubay, Minister and Adviser to the Prime Minister of Ethiopia, highlighted the vital role of ‘policy independence’ in achieving the structural transformation that has generated a decade of double digit growth in Ethiopia. Countries can’t simply import solutions from elsewhere, he argued, but need to develop solutions that take full account of local realities.

The IGC works closely with our partner countries to enable them to do just that. We combine a global network of top researchers with 15 embedded country teams across Africa and South Asia that develop long-term relationships with policy makers and provide a platform for engaging researchers. In this way, the IGC has made possible a new, collaborative approach that brings researchers and policy makers together to identify and answer the tough questions that underlie their growth policy challenges.

Empowering countries to strengthen their growth fundamentals has acquired a new urgency as the key external drivers of growth have collapsed, with the end of the commodity boom and the flows driven by global liquidity. As many of the key growth challenges facing these countries are complex and poorly understood, developing effective policies requires innovation and experimentation to generate new evidence and new ideas.

The IGC achieved a step change in engagement and impact this year. Our country programmes ramped up levels of activity and policy impact, building on a record flow of new research projects. More than 600 proposals,

totalling over £40 million in value, were submitted to our open, international calls for proposals and our research network expanded significantly, with a 50% rise in local researcher participation.

Our research and policy engagement focuses on the four key drivers of inclusive growth – effective states, productive firms, functioning cities, and accessible and sustainable energy.

Effective states need resources and the capacity to deliver public services. Our work this year on tax, for example, has ranged from strengthening incentives for tax collectors in Pakistan to using social incentives to increase tax compliance in Bangladesh and adopting electronic billing machines in Rwanda to increase VAT compliance.

On cities, our work has focused particularly on affordable housing, transport, and revenue reforms, while a key focus of our work on energy has been on innovative approaches to overcoming the pervasive problem of non-payment.

Building on a long-term collaboration with BRAC, in December we presented seven-year results showing that BRAC’s innovative Graduation Programme has created sustainable jobs for millions of ultra-poor, raising participants’ incomes by almost 40 percent in Bangladesh.

The IGC has created an innovative open platform that provides developing country policy makers with unprecedented access to world-leading researchers. Through long-term relationships and a collaborative approach, this enables our partner governments to develop policy solutions informed by frontier research – and local realities. ●



Jonathan Leape
Executive Director
International Growth Centre (IGC)

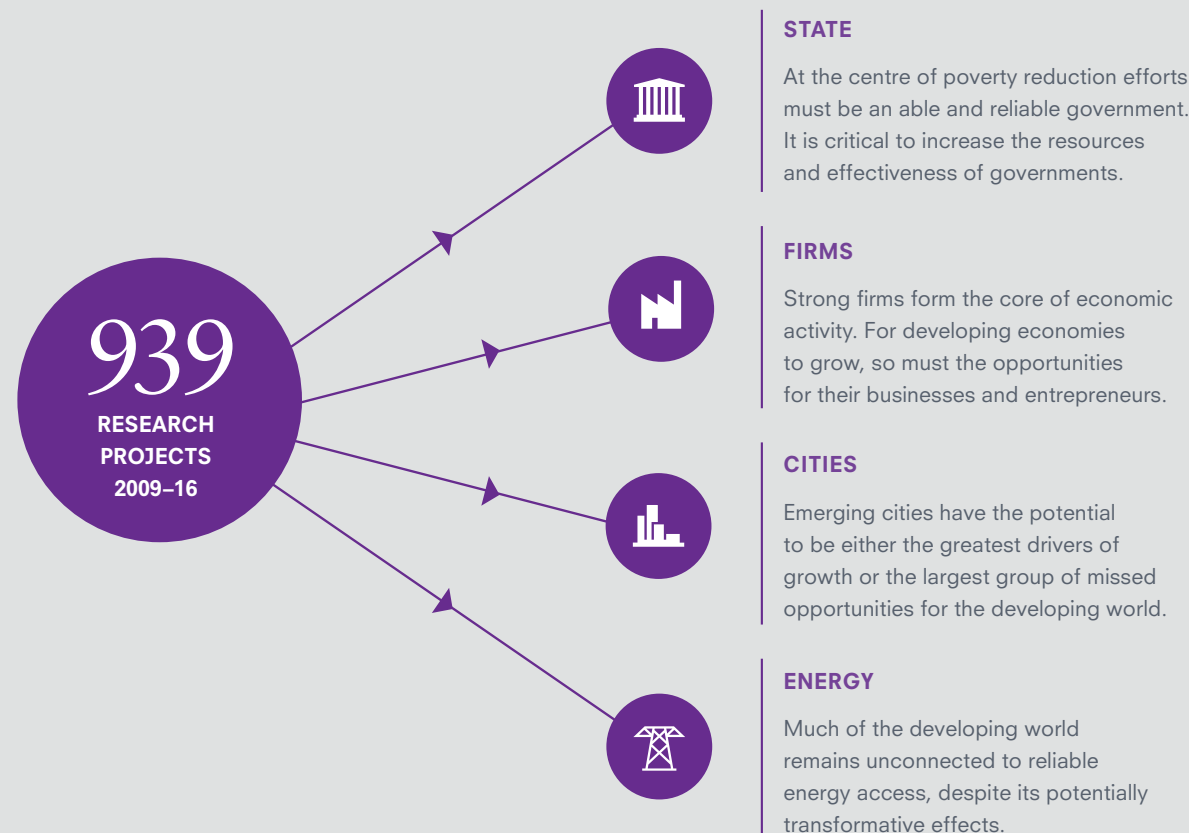
May 2015 – First IGC Cities Conference held in London
July 2015 – Third annual Africa Growth Forum held in Ethiopia
September 2015 – IGC-LSE blog series on Sustainable Development Goals launched
November 2015 – Pakistan tax collectors research published in Quarterly Journal of Economics
December 2015 – 7-year research results on BRAC programme released at Ultra-poor Conference
January 2016 – MoU signed with City of Kampala for future urbanisation research
February 2016 – Research on power supply in Bihar, India featured in The Economist
March 2016 – 148 new research projects commissioned, an 18% increase from 2014–15

Our model

Economic growth

Long term poverty reduction will not be achieved without sustainable economic growth. Yet there remain many unanswered policy questions on how to promote economic growth. The IGC works with policymakers to find answers to these questions.

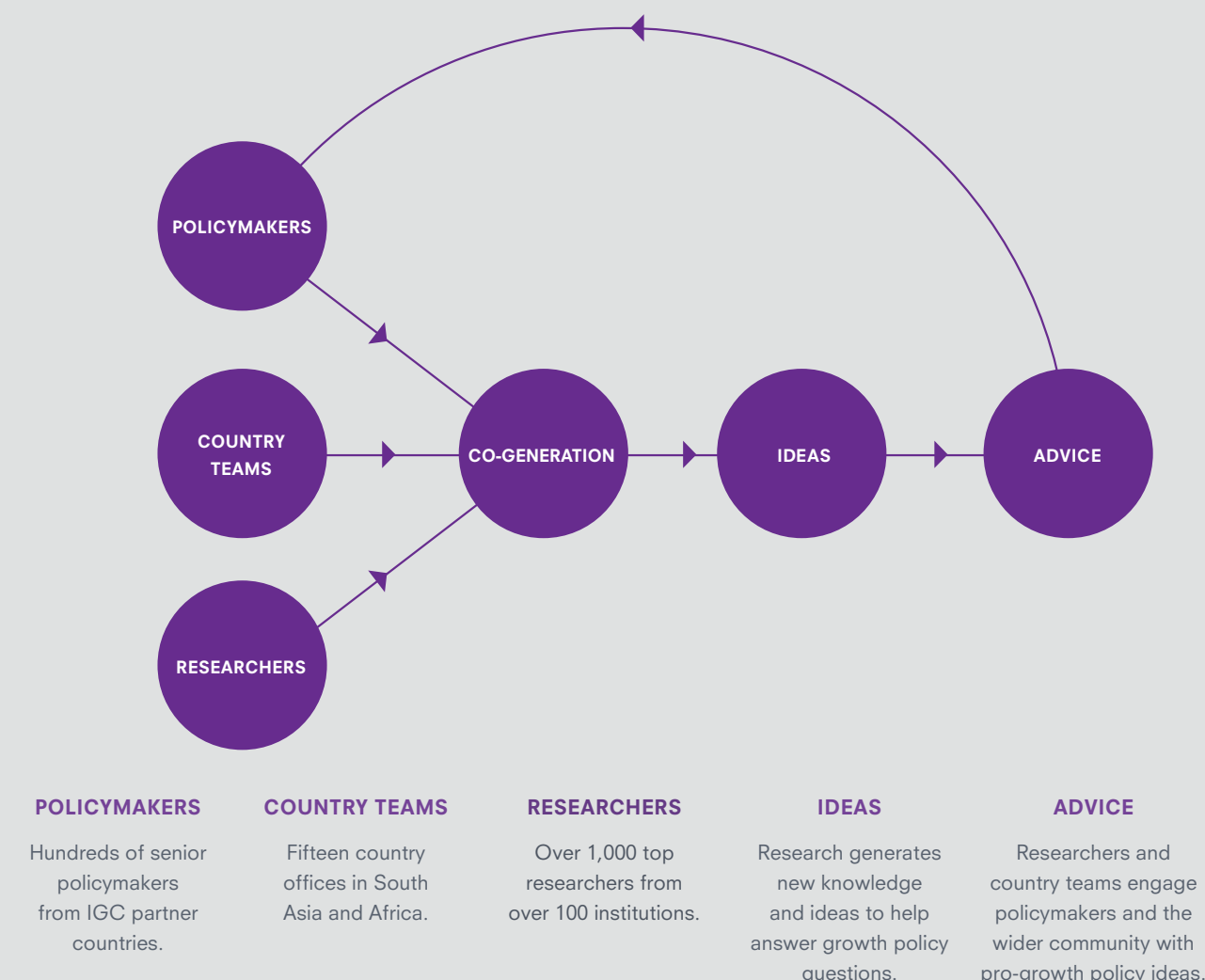
Our research themes



We focus our research on state effectiveness, productive firms, cities, and energy – all critical areas for promoting growth.

Co-generating knowledge

The IGC uses an innovative ‘co-generation’ approach – enabling policymakers and researchers to jointly set research agendas. Embedded country teams work with policymakers to determine key growth challenges and identify country priorities.



Engaging policy stakeholders from the beginning ensures that demand-led research feeds directly into policymaking. This approach is guided by the principle that for research to foster policy impact, it must be conceived, developed, and embedded within local policy contexts.

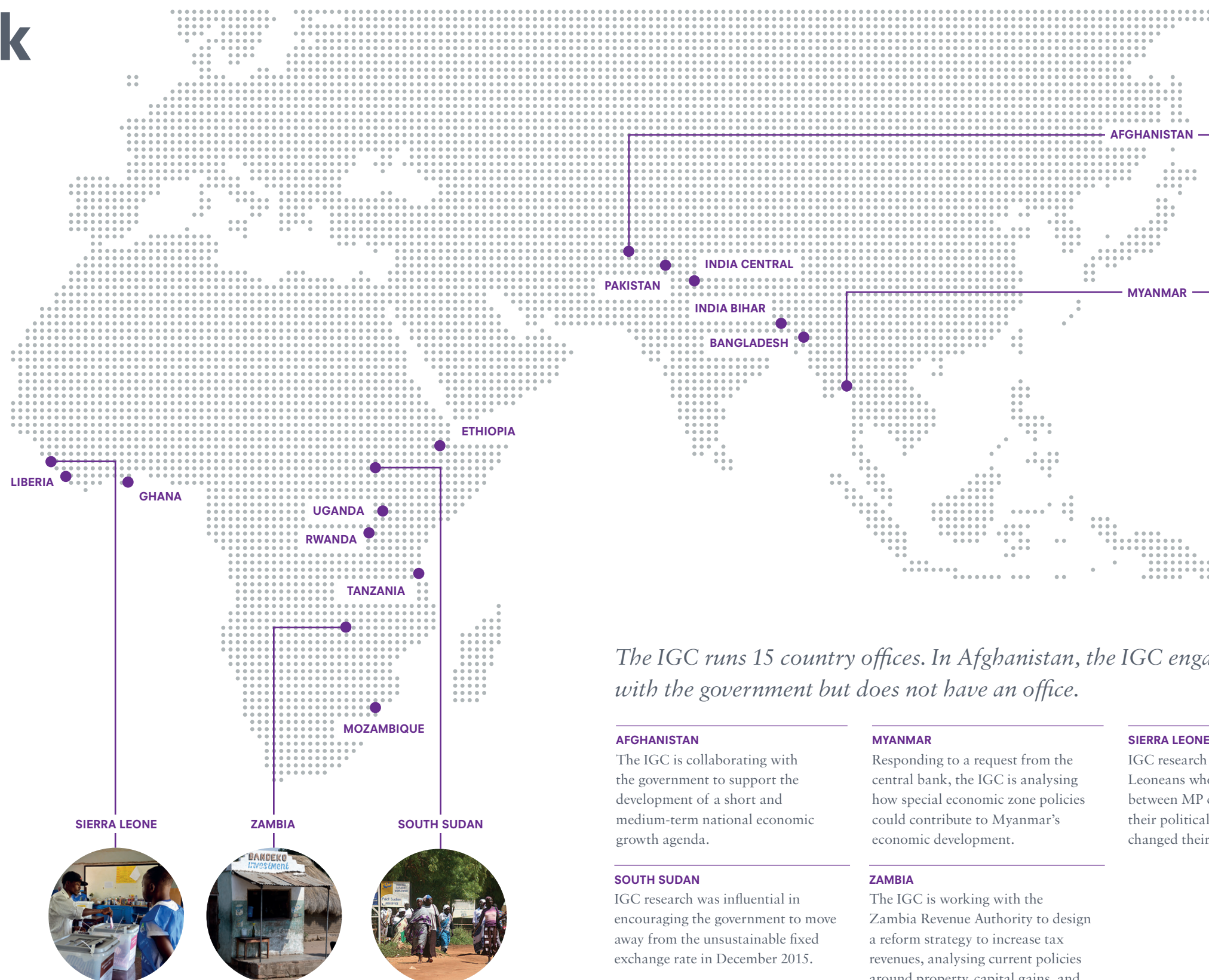
Our work

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ACTIVE PROJECTS
2015–16

The IGC promotes sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice based on frontier research. The IGC directs a global network of world-renown researchers and in-country teams in Africa and South Asia and works closely with partner governments to generate high quality research and policy advice on key growth challenges.

In 2015–16 our research projects influenced policymaking, in areas such as infrastructure delivery (Ghana), power supply (India-Bihar), special economic zones (Myanmar), affordable housing (Rwanda), elections (Sierra Leone), monetary policy (South Sudan), and women's economic empowerment (Zambia).



The IGC runs 15 country offices. In Afghanistan, the IGC engages with the government but does not have an office.

AFGHANISTAN

The IGC is collaborating with the government to support the development of a short and medium-term national economic growth agenda.

SOUTH SUDAN

IGC research was influential in encouraging the government to move away from the unsustainable fixed exchange rate in December 2015.

MYANMAR

Responding to a request from the central bank, the IGC is analysing how special economic zone policies could contribute to Myanmar's economic development.

ZAMBIA

The IGC is working with the Zambia Revenue Authority to design a reform strategy to increase tax revenues, analysing current policies around property, capital gains, and value-added tax.

SIERRA LEONE

IGC research found that Sierra Leoneans who viewed debates between MP candidates increased their political knowledge and changed their voting behaviour.

State | Ghana

Better monitoring of infrastructure projects could raise completion rates

In brief

- 1 Timely completion of public infrastructure projects is crucial for efficiency and growth of government investments.
- 2 In Ghana, information on local government infrastructure projects is scattered and difficult to comprehensively analyse.
- 3 This study digitised details of all 216 Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies from 2010–13.
- 4 The findings are informing the National Infrastructure Plan and Spatial Development Framework.

Infrastructure is crucial for economic development and public service provision but its construction remains a challenge. Administrative records from 14,000 local government projects in Ghana were collected, digitised, and analysed for all Metropolitan, Municipal, and District Assemblies (MMDAs), from 2010–13. Capital investment analysis captured type, number, and efficiency of investment projects including completion rates.

Notably, one-third of all projects, representing one-fifth of infrastructure expenditures, remain uncompleted, even three years after starting. Meanwhile, completed projects are typically finished within 12 months. This suggests other explanations may account for poor service delivery, such as low bureaucratic capacity, technical complexity, political favouritism, or corruption.

Findings have motivated a long-term national development plan for Ghana, and informed Ghana's 40-year Development Plan, including an Infrastructure and Spatial Development Plan, currently being drafted. The 40-year Development Plan would become operational for 2018–57.

*“...all the money sitting in these semi-completed infrastructure projects could actually build the equivalent of 700 primary schools per year.”**

The Head of Civil Service reported that project findings were presented to Ghanaian President John Dramani Mahama who subsequently directed that benchmark costs should be established for standard infrastructure projects to guide project delivery across the country. The researcher also presented a comprehensive list of infrastructure projects to the Ghana Audit Service to improve audit project selection.

**Quote by Dr Nii Moi Thompson, Director-General, National Development Planning Commission*



Researcher – Martin J. Williams (LSE) Partner Organisations – Ghana Ministry of Local Government, Ghana Head of Civil Services, National Development Planning Commission

Firms | Bangladesh

Garment factories can bounce back from political strikes



Managing external shocks is a key challenge for entrepreneurs in low-income countries. In spite of often-volatile business environments, the Ready-Made Garment (RMG) sector in Bangladesh has grown significantly over the past decade, accounting for roughly one-eighth of the country's GDP.

However, growth slowed to an estimated 5% in 2015, coinciding with tragic industrial accidents in the sector (including the Tazreen fire and the Rana Plaza collapse) and a marked increase in political strife in recent years. Strikes and worker protests often aim to stop economic activity by preventing movement of people and goods, blocking roads, and sometimes destroying vehicles.

Researchers measured productivity, absenteeism, and quality defects on 809 production lines in 33 large Bangladeshi factories in 2012–14. Findings suggest strikes lasting one or two days had very little effect on productivity or worker

absenteeism. Strikes lasting five days or more had some negative effects on factories, mainly due to supply chain disruptions rather than absenteeism.

Contrary to the popular view that strikes significantly affect the economy, further analysis suggests that factories adjust production fully during a single isolated strike with no net change in output.

Worker protests had a more immediate negative effect, increasing absenteeism and quality defect rates, and decreasing output. A protest in the neighbourhood of a factory reduces both the total number of labour hours and output per hour, even during single-day protests.

The IGC held a discussion on this research in March 2016 with the President and the Joint Secretary of the influential RMG trade and industry body, the Bangladesh Garments Manufacturers & Exporters Association.

In brief

- 1 The Ready-Made Garment sector grew 14% annually from 1994–2014, but slowed to 5% in 2015.
- 2 This study examined the effects of political strikes and worker protests on sector productivity in 2012–14.
- 3 Strikes for 1–2 days had little effect on productivity or absenteeism.
- 4 Worker protests had a more direct negative effect – more absenteeism, higher defect rates, and less output.

Researchers – Rocco Macchiavello (University of Warwick), Chris Woodruff (University of Warwick)

Cities | Rwanda

Incremental building could help alleviate the housing shortage in Kigali

To address the existing housing backlog and growing demand, the City of Kigali (CoK) would need to provide an average of 30,000 new housing units per year, at prices affordable to low-income households. However, most new housing is expensive and more viable alternatives need to be considered. Kigali's housing challenges have prompted the CoK and the Rwanda Housing Authority (RHA) to explore various low-cost housing options to deliver affordable housing

in a manner that reflects international best practices and responds to Kigali-specific conditions.

Drawing on international experience, available data, and field visits, researchers identified appropriate policies for upgrading unplanned settlements in Kigali's centre, including assessing the feasibility of upgrading and densifying existing housing. The study also examined the costs of developing new housing—distinguishing the impacts of land, infrastructure, finance, and material costs—to inform decisions about optimal housing locations and government support.

The study found that Kigali cannot meet current or future housing demand unless a more

targeted, lower cost model is used. Since the existing housing supply is far greater than the flow of new housing, this requires improving and expanding existing housing. When constructing new housing units, the study recommends an incremental build, sites-and-services, model, that improves housing one step at a time. This reduces financing constraints and allows truly affordable housing to be delivered at scale.

At the request of the RHA director general, the IGC and RHA have established a working group that is currently designing a business plan for a pilot low-income housing neighbourhood, using an incremental build model.



In brief

- 1 An adequate supply of affordable housing is crucial to improving living conditions and facilitating growth in cities.
- 2 The study provided recommendations on implementing a targeted, low-cost housing model in Kigali.
- 3 These included upgrading existing housing and an incremental build model for new housing.
- 4 Findings have resulted in the Rwanda Housing Authority piloting an incremental build neighbourhood programme.

Researchers – Jitendra N. Bajpai (Columbia University), Robert M. Buckley (The New School) Partner Organisations – Rwanda Ministry of Infrastructure, Rwanda Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning, Rwanda Ministry of Local Government, City of Kigali

Energy | India-Bihar

Expanding power supply depends on convincing consumers to pay for electricity

Three hundred million people in India lack electricity access. Energy is a pillar of growth, but the financial sustainability of the electricity sector is a widely acknowledged constraint to India's economic growth. In Bihar, almost half of all power drawn from the electrical grid by consumers is not paid for. Many other Indian states face the challenge of low revenues from power generation. The project has, therefore, been designed jointly with the Indian Energy Department and electricity distributors.

Researchers are testing the effect of linking power supplies to neighbourhood payment rates. Neighbourhoods with higher payment rates receive more power per day. Greater compliance and revenues can, in the short-term, increase power to places that pay for it, and, in the medium-term, improve electricity distribution through higher revenues.

An initial baseline survey of approximately 15,000 households and businesses has been conducted, and an incentive scheme has been implemented. Early results suggest incentives have a positive effect on hours of electricity supply and revenue mobilisation. In the long-term, offering the right incentives to encourage consumers to pay for electricity could boost revenues for suppliers. Despite a change in political leadership, engagement in the project by the Energy Department remains high.

The project team has been working as a technical advisory group within the Government of Bihar's Energy Department. The project team's recommendations determine electricity supply to sample districts on an ongoing basis. If results are encouraging, the Energy Department expects to scale up the project to other districts.



Researchers – Robin Burgess (LSE), Michael Greenstone (University of Chicago), Nicholas Ryan (Yale University) Partner Organisation – Government of Bihar Energy Department

In brief

- 1 Nearly half the power drawn in India's poorest state, Bihar, is not paid for.
- 2 The financial sustainability of electricity distribution is critical to expanding power supply.
- 3 Initial results show linking payment to services has positive effects on utilities and consumers.
- 4 Researchers, working within Bihar's Energy Department, provide technical advice and regulate experimental districts' electricity supplies.

Initiative – Women’s Economic Empowerment | Pakistan

Women’s only transport improves participation in civic, social, and professional activities

In brief

- 1 A well-integrated, inclusive, and safe city-wide public transport network contributes to economic growth.
- 2 Researchers examine the impact of female only transport on women’s labour market integration.
- 3 Preliminary findings show that women prefer female only transport links between home and work.
- 4 Policymakers have discussed initial findings and committed to improving women’s transport links and safety.

Women’s mobility in Pakistan is constrained by cultural and religious norms and safety issues, which limit their usage of public transport. These constraints curtail freedom of movement, and thus participation in civic, social, and professional activities. Despite potential gains from women’s economic empowerment, the effect of safe and affordable modes of transport for women in urban areas remains under-researched.

IGC researchers assessed the impact of access to transport and the differential impact of women’s only transport on mobility, labour force participation, and wellbeing. It aims to test whether this option is an improvement

over other transport services for women. The project provides women-only vans along urban and peri-urban routes in Lahore, and offers a pick-and-drop service targeting female employees from the web company Rozee.pk. The door-to-door transportation takes them between work and home.

“
Cultural and religious norms and safety issues limit women’s usage of public transport, curtailing their freedom of movement.

”

Though still ongoing, the project has elicited strong policy engagement and interest. In September 2015, the Planning and Development Board in Punjab was briefed on both projects and noted that they were relevant for informing the objectives of the Punjab Government’s Growth Strategy. Members of the Mass Transit Authority and the Chief Minister have also expressed interest in following future results from analysis of women’s public transport to inform policy changes.



Researchers – Erica Field (Duke University), Katherine Vyborny (Duke University) Partner Organisations – Lahore Transport Company, Government of Punjab Planning and Development Department

Initiative – Fragile States | Liberia

Community outreach raises citizens’ trust in security and justice



As part of Liberia’s security and justice sector reforms, the Liberia National Police (LNP) established five Regional Justice and Security Hubs to complement state justice and security institutions. To raise awareness of the Hubs, the LNP initiated community outreach ‘confidence patrols’.

Working with William Mulbah, the Deputy Police Director, researchers assessed citizens’ responses to LNP’s Hubs to understand the efficacy of ‘confidence patrols’ in increasing access to and trust in formal security and justice sectors.

Real police officers visited communities to increase citizen-officer interaction through patrols. Researchers measured the impact of patrols and citizen interactions on raising citizens’ awareness and trust in police and the Hubs. Results suggest the patrols increase citizens’ knowledge and strengthen property rights. Lesser effects include lower inci-

dences of assault and domestic violence, and increased (self-reported) usage of police and courts.

“
Results suggest the patrols increase citizens’ knowledge and strengthen property rights.

”

Findings will be incorporated into the Police Support Unit (PSU) training curriculum—a weeklong training for LNP officers to become part of the elite PSU. A national scale-up was confirmed by the Chief of Police, and follow-up requests produced four additional security-related projects. Findings will also be presented to the Ministry of Justice-UN Mission in Liberia’s Joint Implementation Group and Justice and Security Board.

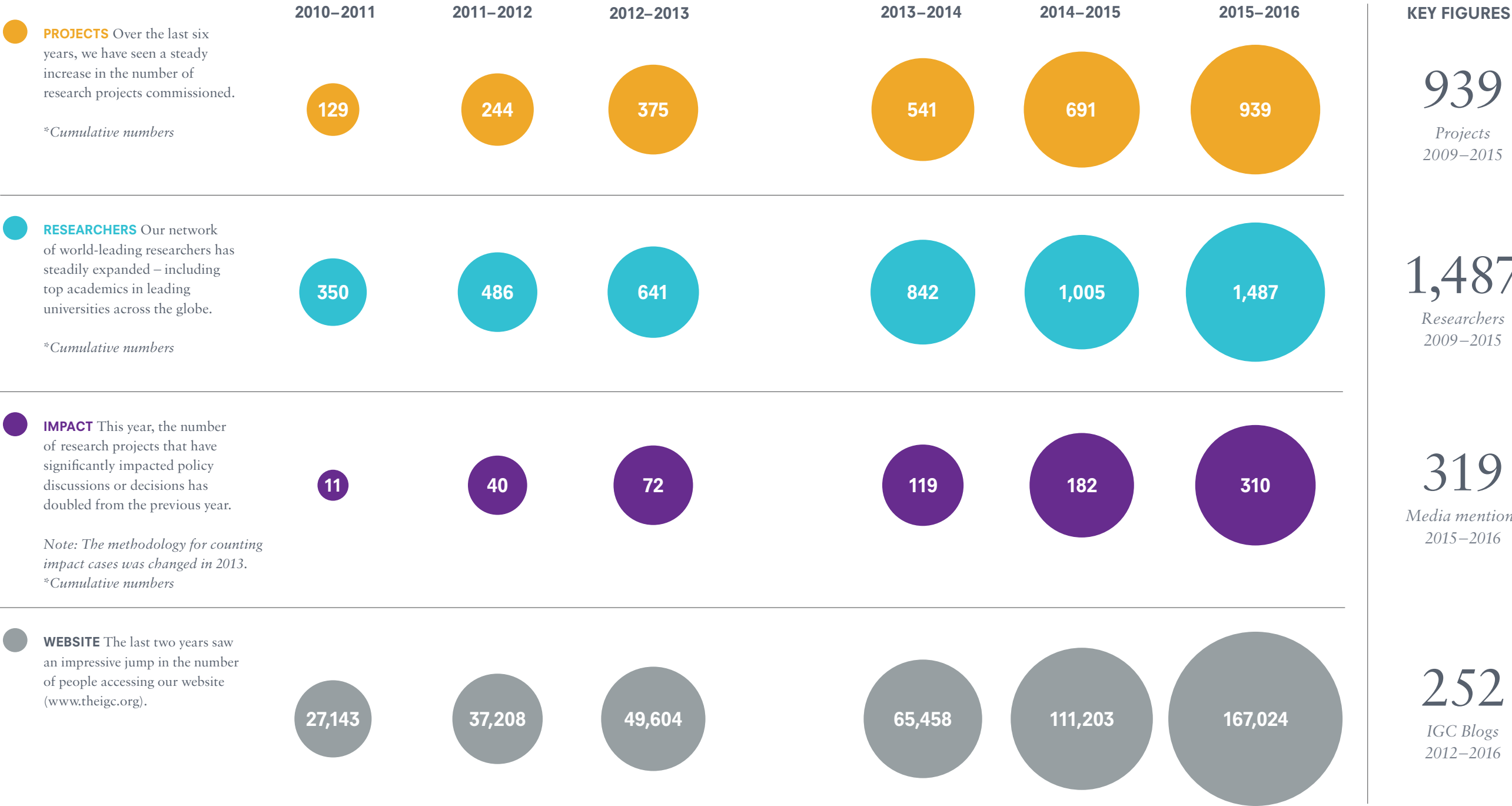
In brief

- 1 Re-establishing the rule of law in post-conflict countries is a significant obstacle to development.
- 2 Researchers examined the impact of the Liberia National Police (LNP’s) community outreach efforts.
- 3 Outreach increased property rights and citizens’ knowledge of police and Regional Justice and Security Hubs.
- 4 The study is informing ongoing LNP community outreach and the new national community policing curriculum.

Researchers – Robert Blair (Brown University), Danielle Jung (Emory University), Sabrina Karim (Emory University), Ben Morse (MIT) Partner Organisations – Liberia Peace Building Office, Liberian National Police

The IGC was founded in 2009 and since then has seen impressive growth across a range of activities.

Figures show individual growth trend and are not comparable across sets.



Our events

The IGC held over 60 events in 2015–16, ranging from in-country research dissemination discussions and capacity building workshops, to research and policy conferences with a global reach. Here are some highlights.

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EVENTS SINCE
THE IGC FORMED



ETHIOPIA

Africa Growth Forum

29 June – 1 July 2015
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

—

The IGC’s third Africa Growth Forum brought together over 180 participants representing researchers and policymakers from over 20 different countries and 50 different institutions and ministries. The forum’s overarching message was the importance of identifying the mechanisms and policies that must be in place for Africa to rapidly industrialise and urbanise.



UNITED KINGDOM

IGC-BRAC Ultra-poor Conference

9 December 2015
London, UK

—

Close to 100 government officials, donors, academics, and practitioners from around the world discussed tackling extreme poverty through anti-poverty ‘graduation’ programmes. IGC released the results of one of the most extensive evaluations of these types programmes, finding that Bangladeshi households who benefit from the programme continue to climb out of poverty at a steady rate seven years later.



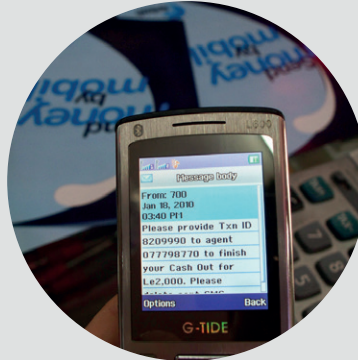
UNITED KINGDOM

Cities Conference 2016

28–29 January 2016
London, UK

—

Over 80 researchers and policymakers including city leaders from Cape Town and Kampala discussed challenges and the latest research on urbanisation. The conference set the agenda for future research to be developed under the cities theme and marked the signing of an MoU between the Kampala Capital City Authority and the IGC for future research projects.



SIERRA LEONE

Workshop on Mobile Money in West Africa

14–16 March 2016
Freetown, Sierra Leone

—

The workshop, co-hosted by the Bank of Sierra Leone, brought together government and private sector representatives from six countries to discuss how to better promote the use of mobile money in West Africa. Representatives from five central banks in Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone produced country roadmaps for policy reforms and identified future research areas.



GHANA

Workshop on Improving Civil Service Effectiveness

23 March 2016
Accra, Ghana

—

IGC researcher Martin Williams presented research results on management practices across Ghana’s civil service and their effect on the quantity and quality of public service delivery in the country. The IGC is working closely with the Head of Civil Service and other government departments to ensure that the results inform proposed civil service reforms.



INDIA

IGC-ADRI Silver Jubilee event

26–30 March 2016
Patna, India

—

The event, co-hosted with the Asian Development Research Institute, featured prominent Bihar government representatives including the Chief Minister, the Ministers of Education and Finance, and the Speaker of the Bihar Assembly. Discussions highlighted several steps necessary to support the efforts of the government for sustaining inclusive growth.

The IGC is managed by a *Steering Group* of top researchers from around the world. The Executive Director leads a senior management team based at the London School of Economics and Political Science.

Steering Group Professor Robin Burgess IGC Director <i>London School of Economics and Political Science</i> Professor Sir Paul Collier IGC Director <i>University of Oxford</i> Professor Chang-Tai Hsieh <i>University of Chicago</i>	Professor John Sutton <i>London School of Economics and Political Science</i> Professor Tony Venable <i>University of Oxford</i> Senior Management Team Professor Jonathan Leape Executive Director Dr Adnan Khan Research and Policy Director	Sarah Lyness Evaluation and Communications Director Hugh Cole Country Programme Director Jo Underwood Chief Administrative Officer Mike Cole Chief Finance Officer
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The IGC’s research programmes are led by 15 *Research Programme Directors (RPDs)* who are each, respectively, world-renowned specialists in one of the IGC’s four research themes: *State, Firms, Cities, and Energy*.

State Professor Oriana Bandiera <i>London School of Economics and Political Science</i> Professor Eliana La Ferrara <i>Bocconi University</i> Professor Gerard Padró i Miquel <i>London School of Economics and Political Science</i> Professor Henrik Kleven <i>London School of Economics and Political Science</i>	Firms Professor Nicholas Bloom <i>Stanford University</i> Professor Greg Fischer <i>London School of Economics and Political Science</i> Professor Imran Rasul <i>University College London</i> Professor Andrés Rodríguez-Clare <i>University of California – Berkeley</i> Professor Tavneet Suri <i>Massachusetts Institute of Technology</i> Professor Christopher Udry <i>Yale University</i> Professor Eric Verhoogen <i>Columbia University</i>	Cities Professor Gharad Bryan <i>London School of Economics and Political Science</i> Professor Edward Glaeser <i>Harvard University</i> Energy Professor Michael Greenstone <i>University of Chicago</i> Professor Nicholas Ryan <i>Yale University</i>
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IGC in-country programmes are led by *Country Directors* working with dedicated *Lead Academics*, supported by locally-based Country Economists. They are based in the offices of think tanks or government bodies of the relevant country.

Bangladesh Dr Sultan Hafeez Rahman Country Director Professor Wahiduddin Mahmud Country Advisor <i>University of Dhaka</i> Professor Mushfiq Mobarak IGC Lead Academic <i>Yale University</i> Professor Fahad Khalil IGC Lead Academic <i>University of Washington</i>	Professor Ashok Kotwal IGC Lead Academic <i>University of British Columbia</i> India – Central Dr Pronab Sen Country Director Professor Dilip Mookherjee IGC Lead Academic <i>Boston University</i> Professor Eswar Prasad IGC Lead Academic <i>Cornell University</i>	Pakistan Professor Ijaz Nabi Country Director Professor Naved Hamid Resident Director Professor Ali Cheema IGC Lead Academic <i>Lahore University of Management Sciences</i> Professor Asim Khwaja IGC Lead Academic <i>Harvard University</i>
Ethiopia Dr Alamayehu Seyoum Taffesse Country Director Professor Douglas Gollin IGC Lead Academic <i>University of Oxford</i> Professor Pramila Krishnan IGC Lead Academic <i>University of Cambridge</i>	Liberia Herbert M’cleod Country Director Professor Eric Werker IGC Senior Advisor <i>Simon Fraser University</i> Professor Jonas Hjort IGC Lead Academic <i>Columbia University</i>	Rwanda Dr Richard Newfarmer Country Director Professor Andrew Zeitlin IGC Lead Academic <i>Georgetown University</i>
Ghana Dr Nii Sowa Country Director Dr Sam Mensah Country Co-Director Professor Christopher Udry IGC Lead Academic <i>Yale University</i>	Mozambique Dr Claudio Frischtak Country Director Professor Sandra Sequeira IGC Lead Academic <i>London School of Economics and Political Science</i> Professor Pedro Vicente IGC Lead Academic <i>Universidade Nova de Lisboa</i>	Sierra Leone Herbert M’cleod Country Director Professor Rachel Glennerster IGC Lead Academic <i>Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL)</i>
India – Bihar Professor Anjan Mukherji Country Director Dr Shaibal Gupta Country Co-Director Professor Maitreesh Ghatak IGC Lead Academic <i>London School of Economics and Political Science</i>	Myanmar Dr Ian Porter Country Director Professor Rocco Macchiavello IGC Lead Academic <i>University of Warwick</i>	South Sudan Dr Richard Newfarmer Country Director Peter Biar Ajak Country Co-Director Professor Nada Eissa IGC Lead Academic <i>Georgetown University</i>

Tanzania

Dr John Page
Country Director
Professor Christopher Adam
IGC Lead Academic
University of Oxford

Uganda

Dr Richard Newfarmer
Country Director
Professor Tessa Bold
IGC Lead Academic
Goethe University Frankfurt
Professor Jakob Svensson
IGC Lead Academic
Stockholm University

Zambia

Dr Anand Rajaram
Country Director
Dr Robert Liebenthal
Country Advisor
Professor Nava Ashraf
IGC Lead Academic
*London School of Economics
and Political Science*

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The International Growth Centre (IGC) aims to promote sustainable growth in developing countries by providing demand-led policy advice based on frontier research. The IGC directs a global network of world-leading researchers and in-country teams in Africa and South Asia and works closely with partner governments to generate high quality research and policy advice on key growth challenges. Based at LSE and in partnership with the University of Oxford, the IGC is funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID).

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