

NEW APPROACHES TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



# LIDC REPORT 2008–2012



# Contents

Message from the Director .....	2
About LIDC .....	3
What is LIDC? .....	3
Bloomsbury Colleges .....	4
Why a London International Development Centre? .....	6
LIDC – a brief history .....	7
Governance .....	7
Membership .....	8
Our Programme .....	9
Research .....	9
LIDC Research Themes .....	10
Teaching and training .....	15
Policy Support .....	17
Partnerships and capacity building .....	19
Being an LIDC Member .....	21
Looking ahead .....	23
Annexes .....	24
Text boxes .....	24



# Message from the Director



I am delighted to introduce this report on the London International Development Centre and its progress to date. When I arrived in late 2007 to establish LIDC, with an empty building and a brief to create a win-win collaboration between six very different, independent academic institutions, I had no idea how successful this effort would be. A very generous start-up grant from the Higher Education Funding Council for England and a formal commitment between Bloomsbury Colleges to participate in and support LIDC laid a strong foundation for our development. But what has really stimulated our growth is the enthusiasm that quickly emerged amongst Bloomsbury Colleges' staff and students to step out of their disciplinary and sector-specific silos and explore development with colleagues from very different backgrounds. Still today, with every new workshop or seminar we organise to bring different development interests and expertise together, we experience that buzz of

energy as participants discover new facts, new perspectives, and new approaches to the problems they are studying.

Our member Colleges (Birkbeck, Institute of Education, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, Royal Veterinary College and SOAS) are all outstanding academic centres with great depth of experience in their particular areas of international development. As specialist Colleges, they saw a value to collaboration across the sectors and disciplines that they represent, in order to address bigger development challenges and to do this better, while accessing resources from a more diverse development funding base. All this worked! By creating, up front, a challenging collaboration that overcame barriers between sectors and disciplines, LIDC Colleges found themselves well prepared for the growing interest in interdisciplinary approaches that now characterises the development community. The breadth created by LIDC, combined with the sectoral depth of each College, quickly created a unique development centre of considerable size and scope.

Since its opening by the Secretary of State for Development in 2008, LIDC has grown rapidly. Membership has grown to more than 3,000 staff, students and alumni by the end of 2012. As of late 2012, LIDC has brought £6 million worth of project funds to its member colleges. Highlights of our first four years include a £3.5 million grant from the Leverhulme Trust to establish LCIRAH – the Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health, and the cross-College LIDC-Lancet Commission on the Millennium

Development Goals which has made a unique contribution to post-2015 thinking.

In this report we look back over our first five years, reflecting on what we have learned and accomplished together with our Colleges and our staff and student members. At the same time, we look to the future of this evolving experiment that is LIDC, where it can grow and how it can contribute more, supporting its members and development goals into the future. In an increasingly uncertain funding climate, we need to continue to find new creative ways of working together. We need to ensure our efforts are cutting-edge, financially viable and sustainable in the long term.

It has been a great privilege to lead LIDC thus far, and to work with such a diverse, high-calibre and committed body of academics, students and alumni who remind me every day that what we are doing is important and worthwhile. We hope that you stay with us for another five years, and more.

Prof. Jeff Waage, OBE  
Director, London International  
Development Centre (LIDC)

## About LIDC

### What is LIDC?

The London International Development Centre (LIDC) is a consortium of the Bloomsbury Colleges of the University of London: Birkbeck, Institute of Education (IOE), London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), Royal Veterinary College (RVC), School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), and The School of Pharmacy (former member).

LIDC was established in 2008 to develop interdisciplinary research and training in international development. Through LIDC,



*LIDC's offices at 36 Gordon Square, Bloomsbury*

the specialist Bloomsbury Colleges bring together their depth of development-related experience across different sectors and disciplines to generate innovative approaches to development problems.

As of late 2012, LIDC has a membership of over 3,000 staff, postgraduate students and alumni across its Colleges. It is headquartered at 36 Gordon Square in London's Bloomsbury.



*Participants at an LIDC workshop*

### Bloomsbury Colleges

LIDC institutional membership was established in 2008 amongst the **Bloomsbury Colleges**, a group of six specialist Colleges of the University of London. The Bloomsbury Colleges group was established in 2004 to foster collaboration in academic and administrative matters, gaining the benefits of critical mass while maintaining the independence to pursue specialist missions. The LIDC building at 36 Gordon Square was set up to support development activities between the Colleges, hosting a changing community of College research groups, inter-College projects and development partners.



**Birkbeck** is London's only specialist provider of flexible part-time higher education. As such, it has built a substantial reputation for training development professionals from civil society and other sectors. Birkbeck's Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies (GEDS) works on a range of international development issues, from childhood studies to geographic information systems. Development-related research is also undertaken in other Birkbeck Departments in areas including law, history, sociology, biology and business. LIDC hosted a group of Birkbeck academics until 2012.

[www.bbk.ac.uk](http://www.bbk.ac.uk)



**The Institute of Education (IOE)** is one of the world's premier schools of education - a specialised graduate teacher training college and an education research institution. LIDC hosts IOE's Development Education Research Centre (DERC), which aims to embed development education within mainstream education policy and research and ensure its long-term policy impact. In 2009-12, DERC led the Students as Global Citizens development awareness project in partnership with LIDC, UCL Medical School, Royal Veterinary College and School of Pharmacy.

[www.ioe.ac.uk](http://www.ioe.ac.uk)



**London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM)** is Britain's national school of public health and a centre for research and postgraduate education in global health. LSHTM has a strong mix of natural and social scientists working in international development areas and distributed across Faculties of Public Health and Policy; Epidemiology and Population Health; and Infectious and Tropical Diseases. LSHTM supports LIDC's administrative systems (IT, HR, finance) and manages the LIDC building. LIDC hosted the London office of Policy Cures (an independent group providing research and analytical tools for the creation of new pharmaceuticals for neglected diseases) on behalf of LSHTM until early 2013.

[www.lshtm.ac.uk](http://www.lshtm.ac.uk)



**Royal Veterinary College (RVC)** is one of the world's leading specialist veterinary institutions. It has a strong research programme in the biology and control of diseases that threaten animal health and production in developing countries, which is complemented by expertise in livestock economics and wildlife disease. RVC's Centre for Emerging, Endemic and Exotic Diseases has a particular focus on zoonotic disease risk, linking animal and human health.

[www.rvc.ac.uk](http://www.rvc.ac.uk)



**School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)** is the only higher education institution in the UK specialising in the study of Asia, Africa and the Near and Middle East. It has strong and unique development research focus particularly in its Departments of Economics; Development Studies, Law; Anthropology; Politics; and Financial and Management Studies. The SOAS Centre for Development, Environment and Policy (CEDEP) is based at LIDC, which also hosts the Royal African Society (RAS) on behalf of SOAS.

[www.soas.ac.uk](http://www.soas.ac.uk)



**The School of Pharmacy (SoP)** is a centre of education and research in pharmacy and pharmaceutical sciences. The School undertakes research ranging from drug development to pharmaceutical policy, including medicines for neglected diseases and formulations appropriate for use in developing countries. In 2012 the School merged with University College London to become the UCL School of Pharmacy, and left LIDC.

[www.ucl.ac.uk/pharmacy](http://www.ucl.ac.uk/pharmacy)



# Why a London International Development Centre?

Interventions in international development all too often take a narrow, sectoral approach which does not address the complex nature of development. For instance, an agricultural intervention may overlook important health implications, or a policy based on an economic model may overlook key social factors limiting its effectiveness. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), while laudable for their collective breadth, exemplify how international development initiatives are often compartmentalised in discrete, sector-focused efforts, neglecting the important links between poverty, health, education, gender and environment. An integrated approach is more effective, but requires a degree of understanding and cooperation across sectors and disciplines, and this needs facilitation.

An early discovery that LIDC made was the dual challenge of working across both disciplines, such as economics and biology, and sectors, such as agriculture and health. Sectoral differences compound disciplinary ones – for instance, in working across agriculture and health sectors in international development, which is the focus of LIDC's Levehulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health (LCIRAH), economics is an essential discipline, but there is a considerable challenge to integrating agricultural and health economics approaches which have developed different tools over decades of sectoral isolation.

In its particular areas of expertise, each Bloomsbury College has considerable

experience in research and training in international development. However, as specialist organisations, the Colleges understood that their contribution would be more effective if they were better engaged with relevant development expertise in other areas. Therefore, they pooled their resources to create LIDC – a facilitative, collaborative environment to generate novel, cross-College initiatives in development and to support improvements in development policy.

## Box 1: What is interdisciplinary research?

Interdisciplinary research integrates information, methods, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more academic disciplines, such as economics, medicine, or law, to solve problems beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research. LIDC's understanding of interdisciplinarity is even broader, as it also encompasses inter-sectoral work, for instance between health and education. Interdisciplinary research is most commonly undertaken to address and solve specific, complex problems. In some cases, however, it has a broader function of generating entirely new areas of academic thinking, by bringing elements of different sectors and disciplines together. The principal challenge of interdisciplinary research involves encouraging experts to step out of their intellectual silos and explore perspectives and approaches offered by other disciplines and sectors. Curiosity, an open mind and respect for other perspectives is a key, and relatively easy, first step. As study and collaboration progress, challenges emerge. The ultimate outcome, we have learned, is not so much the creation of 'interdisciplinary specialists', but the empowerment of disciplinary specialists with valuable tools and perspectives from other disciplines, which facilitates individual and collaborative work.

## LIDC – a brief history

In 2007, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) awarded the Bloomsbury Colleges a £3.7 million Strategic Development Fund grant to establish an international development centre. The Centre became formally operational in mid 2008, when development research groups from the six Colleges moved into the building at Gordon Square purchased jointly by Bloomsbury Colleges.



*LIDC launch with HRH The Princess Royal*

In order to engage academics, LIDC was established as a membership organisation that staff, and subsequently students and alumni were eligible to join. LIDC's work was structured under four main objectives:

- **Research:** Develop high-quality interdisciplinary research between Bloomsbury Colleges and with their research partners;
- **Training:** Develop new and innovative teaching programmes to support development goals;
- **Policy Support:** Inform national and international policies on development through linking research, policy and practice;
- **Capacity Strengthening:** Help our partners in low and middle income countries to strengthen capacity to

address the needs of higher education and research institutions, NGOs and governments.

LIDC began to organise workshops bringing together academics from different disciplines, and later started coordinating inter-College bids and winning funding to run joint research projects. Gradually, LIDC developed a portfolio of mostly small inter-College projects, led by different institutions, as well as a few quite large projects. In 2010, we were awarded a £3.5 million grant from the Leverhulme Trust to establish LCIRAH - the Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health. Subsequently, LIDC built its first overseas partnership, with a view to building the capacity of the Southern African Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance (SACIDS) in the area of research and teaching.

A key event in LIDC's history was the Lancet-LIDC Commission report on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) published in 2010, for which LIDC assembled across LSHTM, SOAS and IOE a team of academics with expertise on each of the MDGs, to inform future goal-setting.

## Governance

Since its establishment, LIDC activities have been overseen by senior management from the Colleges.

LIDC's work is overseen by a committee of the [Heads of Bloomsbury Colleges](#).

[The Executive \(Management\) Group](#), appointed for the first time in the summer of 2012, now provides regular oversight of



## LIDC Report 2008–2012

LIDC management and administration, academic developments, finance and other activities, including implementation of the strategy.

**The Strategy Group**, in existence since LIDC's earliest days, advises on LIDC's work programme. Strategy Group members represent and promote LIDC in their Colleges and advise the LIDC Director on their Colleges' interests in cross-College programmes, as well as help with the development of these programmes.

**The International Advisory Board** (in existence until early 2013) helped the LIDC Director identify new opportunities in international development and to make links in the broader development community. It consisted of leading academics based at institutions in London and overseas.

**The Director of LIDC** provides day-to-day leadership and strategic direction at LIDC. He is assisted by the **LIDC team** of four, each responsible for a different area of operations: research, communications, administration, facilities and finance.



*The LIDC Team*

## Membership

While Bloomsbury Colleges represent LIDC's institutional membership, LIDC operates on a daily basis as an individual

membership organisation, open to staff and postgraduate students from all LIDC Colleges and alumni of these institutions. LIDC membership has been growing steadily over the years and at the end of 2012 comprised more than 3,000 individuals: staff, alumni and students from across Bloomsbury Colleges. All members are working on or interested in issues related to international development. They span six institutions and represent expertise at all levels of seniority, from all sectors and academic disciplines: economics, sociology, public health, veterinary science, agriculture, etc.

In 2012, LIDC membership expanded by 35%, gaining over 700 new members. Our London members are based across LIDC Colleges and in the LIDC building at 36 Gordon Square, which houses about 65 international development specialists from our Colleges and partners.

In the survey of LIDC membership conducted in the summer of 2011, 92.8% of respondents found LIDC membership useful or very useful.



*LIDC members at the MDG conference*

# Our Programme

**L**IDC has developed a distinctive business model. LIDC concentrates its activities on initiatives that involve staff from two or more Colleges. It helps Colleges to develop projects, but it does not execute them. Instead, each successful project is led by one College on behalf of others. This frees LIDC's small team to focus on developing new projects and activities. LIDC services to academics and students are free, and all benefits arising from LIDC facilitation go to the Colleges. Our success is measured against these benefits. Colleges pay an annual subscription and then cover the balance of LIDC costs in proportion to the benefits they each receive.

## Research

LIDC develops research initiatives in response to demand within Colleges and/or external opportunities that arise, such as calls for proposals from development agencies and funding bodies.

LIDC uses the workshop format as both an output in itself and a mechanism, whereby academics, policy-makers and practitioners map one another's interests and expertise and explore opportunities for joint projects. A sample of LIDC workshops held in 2011-12 is given in Box 2.

Where workshops generate new interdisciplinary ideas, we help members turn these into collaborative research programmes and publications, we seek funding opportunities, and assist with programme coordination.

Over time, LIDC has drawn together research initiatives in the same topical area to create a number of [Research Themes](#), each associated with a cross-College Working Group that meets on a regular basis. However, LIDC also continues to actively promote collaboration in many areas of natural and social sciences outside of the themes: for instance, the Horn of Africa famine of 2011 inspired LIDC to host a workshop on development issues in Somalia.

Research grants are only one output of LIDC research activities. LIDC also brings together academics to generate innovative, interdisciplinary research publications. The development of a seminal, cross-sectoral analysis of the Millennium Development Goals illustrates this process and is summarised in Box 9. Other interdisciplinary publications generated by LIDC are listed in the Annex (available online).

### BOX 2: LIDC Workshops – a diversity of topics and stakeholders

Some of recent workshops at LIDC include:

- Use of Geographic Information Systems (GIS) in International Development
- Introduction to mobile learning and development: exploring pedagogical design and implementation
- Legal appropriation: Taking of and by law
- Development issues in Somalia and the Horn of Africa
- Faith-based International Development

### LIDC Research Themes

Between 2008 and 2011 LIDC developed projects under three core themes: Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases; Linking Agriculture and Health Research; Improving Access to Medicines by the Poor. Two of these themes have evolved into working groups and are described in more detail below. In 2012 we added two more themes to our portfolio: Higher Education for Development; and Impact Evaluation for International Development.

### *Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases*

LIDC facilitates interdisciplinary approaches to studying emerging and zoonotic diseases. It brings together the expertise of researchers in human and animal medicine, molecular biology, social science, wildlife and environmental science, and economics across its Colleges to explore the drivers and dynamics of disease emergence and impact, and to design solutions.

### Box 3: Why study zoonotic diseases?

Zoonotic diseases are caused by infectious agents, such as viruses and bacteria, that are transmitted from animal hosts to humans, where they may cause short-term illnesses, such as food borne diseases like salmonella, or spread between humans to cause epidemics, like swine flu. Zoonotic diseases like HIV/AIDS, bird flu and SARS have raised global concern about risks of pandemics. These diseases are particularly significant in low and middle income countries, which provide the ideal conditions of high biodiversity, environmental change and rapidly growing livestock and human populations that stimulate zoonotic disease emergence. Close interactions of livestock and humans, and poor hygiene, also increase disease risk in poor communities. Some zoonotic diseases reduce livestock production and trade, generating additional impacts on poverty and health.

‘One Health’ is an approach that integrates human and animal health research and practice to address common challenges in a more holistic way. It places particular emphasis on understanding the environmental and societal contexts that link animal and human health, and on finding the optimal mix of approaches to deal with zoonotic disease threats.





LIDC has developed a number of research collaborations, particularly between LSHTM and RVC, which have brought veterinary and public health researchers together with sociologists, economists and policy specialists to understand the drivers of zoonotic disease problems for development and their technical and policy solutions. Work in Asia has focused on the consequences of rapid intensification of livestock production, while in Africa LIDC has operated since 2008 a partnership with the Southern African Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance (SACIDS). SACIDS is a 'One Health' consortium of veterinary and public health institutions in Tanzania, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zambia, Mozambique and South Africa.

An interdisciplinary approach to animal and human disease issues has also been the basis for other LIDC activities, including workshops on disease modelling, anti-microbial resistance and the delivery of medicines to poor communities, where comparisons of veterinary and public health experience have stimulated researchers to think differently and collectively about research and management approaches.

### *Linking Agriculture and Health Research*

In 2010 LIDC set up the Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health (LCIRAH) with a £3.5 m grant from the Leverhulme Trust. LCIRAH will build a new inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary platform for integrating research in agriculture and health, with a focus on international development goals, under the new paradigm 'agri-health' (see Box 4). This interdisciplinary initiative has brought together research groups working on agricultural production, nutrition and

public health, political and cultural dimensions of agriculture, food and health and global change processes from LSHTM, RVC, SOAS and SoP. The Leverhulme Trust has funded senior academic positions, lectureships, postdoctoral fellows and PhD students, all of who work across Colleges in interdisciplinary teams.

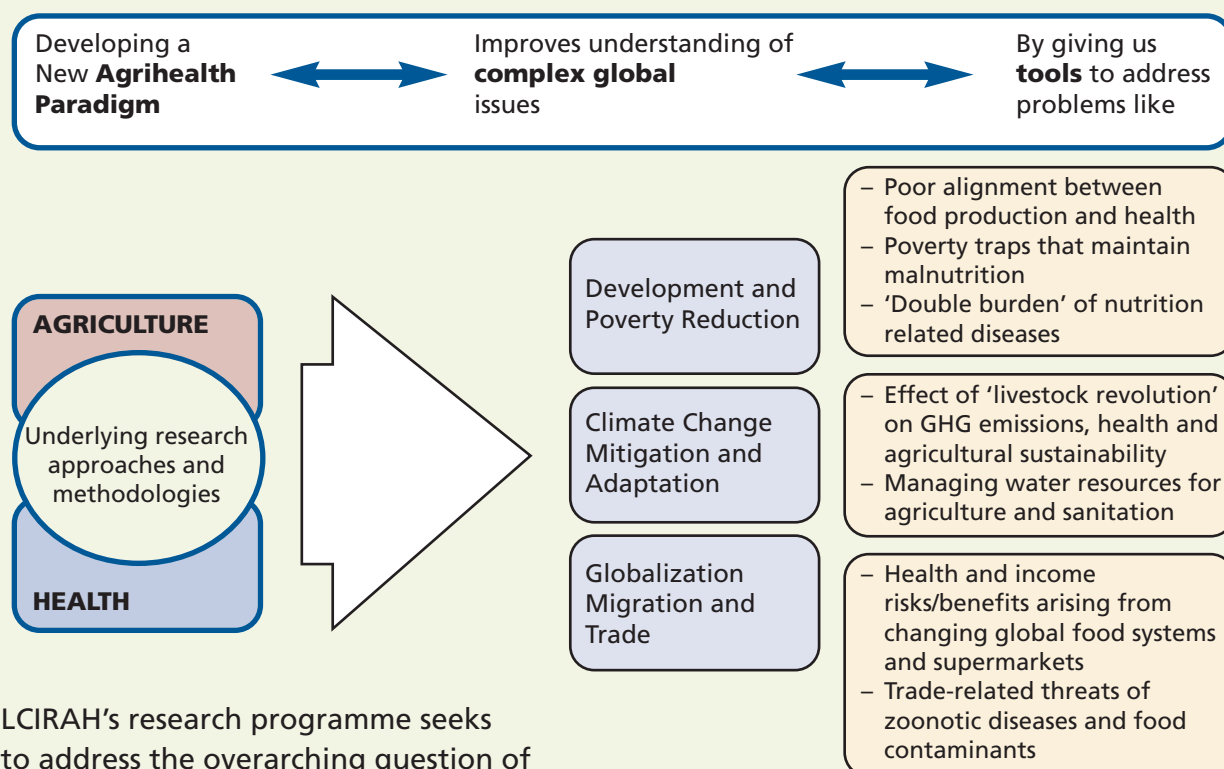


Other programmes have developed on the platform created by LCIRAH, including a gap analysis of current research on agriculture for improved nutrition in low and middle income countries and participation in a programme on [Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition in South Asia \(LANSA\)](#), funded by DFID. In March 2012 LCIRAH collaborated with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and DFID to bring together key private and public sector actors in nutrition for a high-level dialogue focused on building effective public-private partnerships.

To encourage research and methods development for agri-health, LCIRAH organises annual international conferences. Its 2011 conference, organised with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), was on 'Measuring the effects of agri-health interventions', and was attended by

119 representatives from 18 countries. The second LCIRAH workshop, in July 2012, focused on 'The Role of Agricultural and Food Systems Research in Combating Chronic Disease for Development', and the third conference, on 'Developing Methods for Agriculture and Health Research', is planned for June 2013.

#### Box 4: Agri-health – a new interdisciplinary paradigm



LCIRAH's research programme seeks to address the overarching question of 'How do we achieve sustainable food and agriculture systems which promote health and well being for all people?' We argue that this challenge can only be answered by building a new research paradigm, which integrates knowledge and methods in agriculture and health to address complex global question, as illustrated in the diagram.

Agriculture and health interact in many complex ways. Improving food production may increase the availability of healthy foods to the poor, or it may

increase incomes of poor households, which gives them better access to healthcare. Despite agricultural advances, however, undernutrition persists in many low and middle income countries, and these same countries today are experiencing an epidemic of food-related non communicable diseases, associated in part with the supply and trade of cheap agricultural commodities and the high price of more nutritious foods.

### *Higher Education for Development*

LIDC brings together expertise in the Institute of Education in research into education and development with sectoral interest from other Colleges in areas like education for health and agricultural development. The common objective of this collaboration is to establish how best to deliver individual and institutional capacity strengthening through North-South partnerships and training programmes.

In March 2012 LIDC commissioned a study on 'Examining development evaluation in higher education interventions',

supported by the UK Collaborative on Development Sciences and, together with the Association of Commonwealth Universities, organised an international conference 'Measuring the Impact of Higher Education Interventions for Development'. Experts from higher education, impact evaluation and development sectors agreed on an urgent need to develop reliable metrics for higher education interventions at the individual, institutional and societal level. Subsequently, LIDC initiated a rigorous review of evidence for impact, supported by DFID.

### **Box 5: What role does higher education play in international development?**

With a recent focus of development activity in education on attainment of basic education targets in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), higher education for international development has become a comparatively neglected area. Yet recent studies highlight the need for more professionals in low and middle income countries to underpin attainment of MDGs, for instance through the training of teachers and health professionals, and to underpin economic growth.

There is a long history of investment in higher education as a contribution to international development. UK universities, like others in high income countries, have provided degrees to students from low and middle income countries. They have also undertaken, often with donor funding, training and capacity building projects with partner universities and institutions there.



*LIDC conference on Measuring the Impact of Higher Education Interventions for Development*

Development agencies have invested in building capacity in local universities and institutions.

Within the development community there has been a degree of scepticism about the value of investment in training individuals, given risks like 'brain drain' and a lack of institutional capacity to make good use of highly trained individuals on their return. Similarly institutional partnerships have sometimes been criticised as being Northern driven and unsustainable in the long term.

However, there is a general lack of evidence on the impact of investment in individual and institutional capacity building through higher education, and indeed a lack of methodologies to compare and evaluate 'what works sustainably' for such investments. Where methods have been developed, they have often focused on specific sectors of professional training, such as health, and their wider applicability has not been explored. LIDC and its Higher Education Working Group are trying to fill that knowledge gap.



### *Impact Evaluation*

Different sectors have historically adopted different approaches and methods to impact evaluation. LIDC brings together expertise from these sectors and researchers with experience in different methods to share approaches to evaluating development interventions. Often problems are common, such as the evaluation of interventions where the opportunity for establishing controls or extensive replication did not exist. In 2012, in cooperation with the International Initiative on Impact Evaluation (3ie), LIDC organised a cross-sectoral workshop on these 'small n' problems. Together, 3ie and LIDC

have run since 2011 a popular series of seminars on impact evaluation for London-based development specialists from academia, government and NGOs (see Box 6).

Inter-sectoral development impacts are poorly understood and methods for their measurements are few. In a recent DFID-funded project with the Institute of Development Studies, LIDC researchers have explored the interaction between development and health interventions, for instance in the reduction of malaria, and how these might be better measured and understood.

### **Box 6: What works in international development?**

Across the field of international development, there is rapidly growing interest in impact evaluation, a relatively new area, driven by the need of governments, funding organisations and NGOs to better target aid and other development activities. The Millennium Development Goals have helped to engender a lasting culture of monitoring and evaluation in international development.

**The 3ie-LIDC seminar series 'What works in international development'** explores key issues in impact evaluation of development interventions. It has been running on a monthly basis since January 2011, attracting a large and diverse audience of academics and development practitioners. In the past two years, the seminar attempted to answer, among others, the following questions:

- Can entrepreneurship transform economic lives of the poor?
- Can conditional cash transfers protect children's schooling when their father departs the household?
- Does health insurance protect the poor?
- Does microfinance lift people out of poverty?
- Does Internet-based medical education work?
- Can agricultural interventions improve children's nutrition?



*Participants at 3ie-LIDC seminar*

## Teaching and training

LIDC recognises the importance of educating future leaders, in areas of research, policy and implementation, in order to deliver on development goals. The Bloomsbury Colleges are all world-class teaching institutions regularly coming on top of league tables in their specialist disciplines such as public health, education, development studies, etc. LIDC adds to this strength of its Colleges by bringing together postgraduate students across Colleges to generate a richer learning environment for international development.

Our teaching activities focus on three areas. Firstly, we help Colleges to promote and create degrees and courses in international development. Secondly, we support interdisciplinary development learning opportunities for students. Finally, we facilitate interdisciplinary research programmes on improving training for development.

### *Interdisciplinary degrees and courses*

Bloomsbury Colleges offer a wide range of undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications in or related to international development, both face-to-face and via distance learning.

In 2010 LIDC created the Distance Learning for Development (DL4D) web portal to provide details of over 140 short online courses delivered by LIDC Colleges through the University of London International Academy. The DL4D Portal is an easy 'one-stop-shop' for courses in international development available to learners across the globe, including those in full-time employment.



*DL4D portal – [www.dl4d.ac.uk](http://www.dl4d.ac.uk)*

LIDC also works with its Colleges to create entirely new interdisciplinary development degrees. Two of these are currently in development: an [MSc in One Health](#) to be delivered by RVC and LSHTM, and an [MSc in International Development Policy and Practice](#) by distance learning to be delivered by IOE, SOAS, LSHTM and RVC.

### *Supporting interdisciplinary learning*

LIDC encourages students and early career researchers to think outside the boundaries of their own discipline and/or sector, and take a holistic view of development. Young researchers are encouraged to explore how their discipline is influenced by and influences other fields, and how methods used in one discipline or group of sciences can be successfully used in another.

The Bloomsbury Colleges consortium offers cross-College PhD Studentships to champion interdisciplinary research collaboration. To encourage Bloomsbury PhD Studentships focused on international development, LIDC has provided support for fieldwork expenses for successful proposals in this area. Over the years of LIDC support, the number of international development PhDs has risen to about five per year, about half of total studentships.

To support PhD students, LIDC organises annual workshops where PhD students

share their research work and explore challenges of working across disciplines, for instance in terms of publication and careers. In 2012, LIDC broadened this support for PhD students by launching the LIDC - ESRC Doctoral Training Centre Seminar Series on 'Understanding International Development'.

### BOX 7: What is an interdisciplinary PhD?



Luke Harman is a PhD candidate with the Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health (LCIRAH).

His research work is focused on the socioeconomic-related inequality of an agricultural input subsidy programme in Malawi and the commercial market impacts of an ITN subsidy programme in Tanzania, under the working title 'Agricultural and Health Input Subsidies: Inter-sectoral Lessons from Theory and Practice'.

Luke is jointly supervised by Prof. Andrew Dorward of SOAS and Dr. Catherine Goodman of LSHTM. His research covers two disciplinary areas, agriculture and health, to which Luke is applying an economic lens.

#### *Improving training for development*

In order to be able to equip researchers and future development professionals with adequate skills and tools for the working environment, we need to know which approaches and pedagogies work and which do not. Therefore, LIDC supports research into teaching, i.e. evaluating different teaching strategies,

innovation in Information and Communication Technology (ICTs), capacity strengthening in partner universities, and raising development awareness.

A key project in this area has been Students as Global Citizens, implemented with the Development Education Research Centre (DERC) based at the IOE from 2010 to 2012, with support from DFID. The project brought together researchers and teachers from IOE, SoP, RVC and University College London (UCL) to explore how students in professional medical, veterinary and pharmacy training learn about international development and how their development awareness can be enhanced.

This project has led to changes in the professional curricula of all participating Colleges, and to three publications: UCL launched 'The Global Doctor' in September 2012, followed by the Royal Veterinary College (RVC) who launched the 'Veterinary Students as Global Citizens' in November 2012. A similar publication will be launched in early 2013 by the UCL School of Pharmacy.

LIDC has a particular interest in distance learning for development because of its value to low and middle income countries, and the strengths of its Colleges in delivering distance learning. As part of this initiative, LIDC coordinated a project to evaluate approaches to the delivery of training in health by distance learning. Supported by the UK Department of Health, this 'Distance Learning for Health' (DL4H) project engaged LIDC Colleges and other institutions in a global review of health training at a distance in low and middle income countries.



## Box 8: Distance Learning for health – what works?

LIDC's report [Distance Learning for Health: What works](#) presents findings from a global review of distance learning programmes for medical professionals in low and middle income countries.

Distance learning comes out of the report as a promising mode of training delivery, either as a stand-alone or particularly as part of blended learning. It offers a range of benefits relative to face-to-face learning, such as increased access to training for health workers; and training compatible with on-going provision of community healthcare.

As such, distance learning has the potential to help remedy the crisis-level shortage of health workers internationally, contributing to an increase in the number of health workers and strengthening the capacity of health systems for better service delivery.



## Policy Support

LIDC strongly believes in research that finds an application in development work, at both the operational and policy level. In particular, we see it as our objective to generate research that helps design good policies and good interventions that work, thus improving the lives of people in the world's poorest countries. We also work towards increasing the capacity of our member Colleges to support policy making for international development. Our underlying policy theme is working across sectors and disciplines to better address complex development challenges.

For example, the development of the Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health (LCIRAH) has helped the UK Department for International Development (DFID) to build its cross-sectoral focus on agriculture, nutrition and health, while the LIDC-Lancet Commission on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (see Box 9) attracted press and policy interest at a critical 2010 evaluation, five years before the goals end date. Our cross-College MDG team has subsequently contributed to UK Parliamentary enquiries on a post-2015 development agenda.

LIDC has raised the policy profile of its Colleges by organising seminars and debates on key development issues at our Colleges and in the UK Parliament. Working with partners like 3ie, ONE, Policy Cures and the Royal African Society (RAS), we have organised events on issues such as microfinance, drugs for neglected diseases, development beyond the aid agenda, and the role of advocacy in research and policy. These events have

been attended and widely commented on by academics, policy-makers and

practitioners from civil society organisations.

### BOX 9: Lancet-LIDC Commission 'The Millennium Development Goals: a cross-sectoral analysis and principles for goal setting after 2015'



In November 2008 LIDC held a conference entitled 'No Goals at Half-time: What Next for the MDGs?', an interdisciplinary expert assessment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the mid-point towards their target date of 2015. Following up from the conference, LIDC teamed up with the journal Lancet to produce the Lancet-LIDC Commission report 'The Millennium Development Goals: a cross- sectoral analysis and principles for goal setting after 2015', published in September 2010 to coincide with the UN summit on the MDGs.

The publication brought together experts in each different MDG from IOE, SOAS, LSHTM and selected counterparts in Africa and Asia. The project started with experts summarising progress and problems with their specific MDGs, and then

the identification of common problems and solutions across all the goals. The team then developed a small set of principles to guide integrated development of a post-2015 development agenda.

Since its publication the report has been widely cited and circulated internationally by the UN, NGOs, think tanks and government ministries abroad, including the Guardian, UN Economic Commission on Africa, The World Family Organization, and Save the Children. Over 2011 and 2012, staff in DFID tasked with progressing the post-2015 development agenda appealed to the project team in formulating its plans for future goals. Professor Jeff Waage was asked to present the publication to the DFID Health Division and the post-2015 MDG team in May 2011.

In September 2012 the team undertook for DFID a study on whether 'stunting' was a good cross-sectoral indicator for future goal setting. In August 2012, the MDG team prepared a submission to the UK Parliament's International Development Committee enquiry on the post-2015 development agenda. Professor Andrew Dorward (SOAS) and Professor Elaine Unterhalter (IOE) were subsequently invited to give oral evidence to the Committee in October 2012.

## Partnerships and capacity building

LIDC is a collaborative institution by its very nature. In addition to its cross-College activity, LIDC has developed a range of partnerships with organisations working on various aspects of international development.

LIDC has run joint projects and events with UK-based research and Higher Education institutions such as the Association of Commonwealth Universities, the UK Collaborative on Development Sciences (UKCDS), University College London (UCL), Institute of Development Studies (IDS), International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), and others. As part of its mission to engage with development practitioners, LIDC reaches out to civil society organisations, such as ONE, CAFOD, and BOND.

LIDC also coordinates international collaborations on behalf of LIDC Colleges. Key amongst these is the [Southern African Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance \(SACIDS\)](#), a One Health consortium of southern African medical and veterinary academic and research institutions involved with infectious diseases of humans and animals in the DRC, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Tanzania.

LIDC contributes to capacity building through the partnerships which its Colleges bring to their collaborations. In some cases, LIDC can provide for partners in low and middle income countries a supporting framework for their own inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as a coordinated link to UK partners.

### BOX 10: Some of LIDC's partnerships at 36 Gordon Square



**3ie – International Initiative for Impact Evaluation** opened their London office at LIDC in October 2010. 3ie funds impact evaluations and systematic reviews that generate evidence on what works in development programmes and why. [www.3ieimpact.org](http://www.3ieimpact.org)

LIDC is working closely with 3ie on impact evaluation initiatives across Bloomsbury Colleges. Among others, the two organisations are running a joint monthly seminar series 'What Works in International Development', they held a joint workshop on 'small n' impact evaluations, and have established a cross-Bloomsbury Working Group on impact evaluation.



Royal African Society  
Promoting Africa

**Royal African Society (RAS)** fosters a better understanding of Africa in the UK and throughout the world; disseminates knowledge and insight to make a positive difference to Africa's development; and celebrates the diversity and depth of African culture. RAS is based in the LIDC building. [www.royalafricansociety.org/](http://www.royalafricansociety.org/)

LIDC has held joint events with RAS (e.g. workshop on Somalia; debate on Britain-Africa agricultural trade and others) and has consulted with RAS on African matters and parliamentary relations.



*BOX 10 Continued*



**Policy Cures** is an independent group providing research, information, decision-making tools and strategic analysis for those involved in the creation of new pharmaceuticals for neglected diseases such as malaria, TB, HIV, pneumonia, sleeping sickness and helminth infections.

[www.policycures.org](http://www.policycures.org)

LIDC and Policy Cures have worked together on research projects on zoonotic diseases and access to medicines. Policy Cures closed its London-based operations in 2013 and now operates from Australia.

This is very much the way in which the LIDC partnership with the Southern African Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance (SACIDS) has operated. LIDC has taken on a coordinating role for the input of RVC and LSHTM into Masters courses run by SACIDS, and into the development of joint inter-sectoral research activities. At the same time, LIDC is helping SACIDS to organise inter-sectoral and interdisciplinary projects across its African member institutions. In 2011, for instance, LIDC facilitated a SACIDS strategic framework planning meeting in Tanzania, and organised a workshop on Research Leadership and Management at the SACIDS One Health conference in Johannesburg. Researchers from LIDC Colleges taught on a SACIDS One Health summer school held in Tanzania in August 2012.



*SACIDS visitors at the LIDC office*

More generally, through its new Working Group on Higher Education and Development, LIDC is exploring how academic institutions and aid programmes in the North can best contribute to individual and institutional capacity strengthening in the South, particularly through equitable partnerships with academic institutions there. In this way, we are exploring how the 'internationalisation' agenda in UK universities can be a force for international development.

# Being an LIDC Member

**L**IDC membership is now over 3,000-strong and growing. The diversity of backgrounds and research interests that our members represent is captured in the examples below.



*Jasmine Gideon, Lecturer in Development Studies, Department of Geography, Environment and Development Studies, Birkbeck*

Jasmine works on the linkages between globalisation and health from a gender perspective and access to healthcare by migrants. She coordinates a cross-College group on gender research and one on Latin America. She is a member of the LIDC Strategy Group.



*Doug Bourn, Director of Development Education Research Centre (DERC), Institute of Education*

Doug leads the DERC and its diverse programme of research and training in development awareness, including the Students as Global Citizens project. Doug is a member of the LIDC Strategy Group.



*Anne Mills, Vice Director and Professor of Health Economics and Policy, Department of Global Health and Development at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine*

Anne's research interests cover financing and organisation of healthcare in low and middle income countries, the economics of

tropical disease control, especially malaria, and the use of economic thinking and analysis in decision making. Anne chairs the LIDC Management Group and was a key contributor to the LIDC-Lancet Commission on the Millennium Development Goals.



*Richard Kock, Professor, Wildlife Health and Emerging Diseases, Department of Pathology and Infectious Diseases, Royal Veterinary College*

Richard undertakes research on emerging disease systems arising from pathogen flow between wildlife, livestock and humans. He leads a number of One Health initiatives across RVC and LSHTM, including development of a cross-College MSc and building research and teaching links with our partner institutions in the Southern African Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance (SACIDS).



*Andrew Dorward, Professor of Development Economics, Programme Director: 'Agricultural Economics, Managing Rural Development', Centre for Development, Environment and Policy, SOAS*

Andrew has long-term interests in issues affecting the livelihoods of poor rural people. At LIDC, he is a member of the Management Committee for the Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health (LCIRAH), and was a key contributor to the LIDC-Lancet Commission on the

Millennium Development Goals and subsequent LIDC work on MDGs.



*Jody Harris, Research Analyst, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), and PhD Candidate, Leverhulme Centre for Integrative Research on Agriculture and Health (LCIRAH), SOAS*

Jody is currently working on a PhD in inter-sectoral nutrition governance. She is a member of LCIRAH and staff of the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) where she undertakes research on agriculture-nutrition-health linkages. She holds a Master's degree in Public Health Nutrition from LSHTM.

The benefits of LIDC membership include, among others:

- Access to a wealth of development-related knowledge and expertise across LIDC Colleges
- Facilitated opportunities to work on interdisciplinary research projects with staff from other LIDC Colleges

- Opportunities for academics and postgraduate students to broaden their knowledge of development and develop new perspectives.
- Work experience placement scheme and career mentoring for student and alumni members.

LIDC runs a variety of events for its members: conferences, workshops, seminars, etc., including three series of events:

- LIDC – ESRC Doctoral Training Centre Seminar Series 'Understanding Development'.
- LIDC – Royal African Society (RAS) debate series 'Beyond Aid'.
- 3ie-LIDC seminar series 'What works in international development'.

On a day to day basis, members stay in touch with LIDC through our daily, weekly and monthly briefings, an interdisciplinary research blog on international development, social media, podcasts, LIDC Moodle (a private online platform for LIDC members), and a range of members-only events (such as the bi-annual networking events) as well as open events.



*Students engage in a debate with advocacy NGO ONE at an LIDC event*



# Looking ahead

**L** IDC's start-up funding from the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) came to an end in 2012. LIDC is now operating as a programme fully funded by its Colleges, generating benefits to members, in terms of interdisciplinary research and learning opportunities that outweigh the costs. Over the next five years, LIDC will seek to extend its current themes through new collaborative projects, and to develop new ones based on development interests of its members and their international partners.

To stimulate new initiatives, we will launch the LIDC Fellowship Scheme - competitive grants awarded to groups of staff from different LIDC Colleges to seed fund new research and training projects. An LIDC Conference for staff, student and alumni members will be held every two years, to explore successes and future challenges for inter-Collegiate collaboration in development.

Finally, LIDC will seek to expand its successful model by building links to other organisations, particularly academic institutions in London, who share our interest in international development and interdisciplinary approaches. By engaging more partners, LIDC will expand the range of sectors and disciplines on which it can draw for innovative new projects, benefitting both existing and new partners. As an expanding forum for international development research and training, LIDC will enhance the student experience for all of its partners, making a wider range of expertise and resources available to those studying international

development in London. Expanding collaboration will increase the value of LIDC as a source of evidence for policy making, and a platform for international partnerships in development.

LIDC's future plan of work will emerge from the collaborations which we help to initiate and nurture. Similarly, pathways of future impact will emerge from new ideas and projects that LIDC will help to catalyse, and from the careers in international development that it enhances through its services to members. From the record of its first five years, LIDC can look confidently to the future as a driver of innovation in international development.

# Annexes

The annexes can be accessed online [www.lidc.org.uk](http://www.lidc.org.uk).

- Governance
- Publications
- Workshops
- Successful bids

## Text boxes

- BOX 1 – What is interdisciplinary research?
- BOX 2 – LIDC Workshops – a diversity of topics and stakeholders
- BOX 3 – Why study zoonotic diseases?
- BOX 4 – Agri-health – a new interdisciplinary paradigm
- BOX 5 – What role does higher education play in international development?
- BOX 6 – What works in international development?
- BOX 7 – What is an interdisciplinary PhD?
- BOX 8 – Distance Learning for health – what works?
- BOX 9 – Lancet-LIDC Commission 'The Millennium Development Goals: a cross-sectoral analysis and principles for goal setting after 2015'
- BOX 10 – Some of LIDC's partnerships at 36 Gordon Square

- 1 Birkbeck
- 2 London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- 3 School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS)
- 4 Institute of Education
- 5 Royal Veterinary College
- 6 The School of Pharmacy



# LIDC

**WAS ESTABLISHED IN 2007**

as a collaboration between  
Bloomsbury Colleges of  
the University of London:

- Birkbeck
- Institute of Education
- London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- Royal Veterinary College
- School of Oriental and African Studies

LIDC facilitates interdisciplinary research and training to tackle complex problems in international development by bringing together social and natural scientists.

[www.lidc.org.uk](http://www.lidc.org.uk)



## Contact us

36 Gordon Square  
London WC1H 0PD  
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7958 8251

Email: [admin@lidc.bloomsbury.ac.uk](mailto:admin@lidc.bloomsbury.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.lidc.org.uk](http://www.lidc.org.uk)  
Blog: <http://lidcblog.wordpress.com>

 [www.twitter.com/#!/lidc\\_uk](https://twitter.com/#!/lidc_uk)

 [www.facebook.com/LIDCUK](https://www.facebook.com/LIDCUK)