

Annual Report 2021

# UNU-WIDER

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UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY  
**UNU-WIDER**

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# Foreword by the Director



**T**he year 2021 marked the mid-point of UNU-WIDER's 2019-2023 work programme addressing the three challenges of transforming economies, states, and societies. When the work programme was formulated a few years back, we had no idea what was coming — that most of the programme implementation period would be shadowed by a global pandemic.

In the beginning of last year, we, along with most of the world, had to drastically change our ways of working and living. However, we took on the challenge and embraced the opportunities this presented. After being forced to cancel the 2020 WIDER Development Conference, this year we forged ahead, fully online. With more than 1,200 people taking part in a total of 88 sessions, the conference was a huge success. I was astonished to see how an online event could still accomplish that same UNU-WIDER spirit that we're used to seeing in our in-person events.

This report showcases our work in 2021 and how it contributes to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. One of our programme's cornerstones has been our work on data. UNU-WIDER now hosts, maintains, and updates three different 'public good' datasets — the World Income Inequality Database (WIID), the Government Revenue Dataset (GRD), and the Economic Transformation Database (ETD). Not only are they important sources for research and policy analysis across our three programme pillars, but also make a key contribution for monitoring the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The 2030 Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet, and prosperity. In this report we'll travel to Ghana and meet Erica, a fruit seller from one of the busy markets in Accra. Our research helps countries like Ghana, that have many informal workers, to exercise more informed labour market policy-making to support the achievement of SDG8 (decent work and sustainable economic growth).

To tackle the unprecedented confluence of COVID-19, economic crises, and the various ongoing conflicts around the world, new solutions are desperately needed. Our job is to ensure that those solutions can be based on solid facts, robust evidence, and reliable data.

**Kunal Sen**

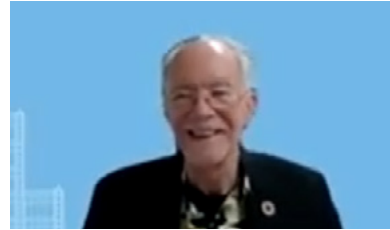
# UNU-WIDER Board 2021

CHAIRPERSON



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Lecturer in Public Policy, Harvard Kennedy School, MA, USA, and Senior Advisor, Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO), MA, USA

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# Message from the Chair of the WIDER Board



2021 was the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic – with economic recovery and the 2030 Development Agenda stalled or undermined in many countries by successive waves of the virus and associated restrictions. The ongoing pandemic crisis has been particularly hard on the working poor who live off daily earnings without legal or social protection.

Under Kunal Sen’s able leadership, UNU-WIDER rose to the challenge. Although UNU-WIDER had to cancel many in-person and in-country engagements, its research teams worked remotely with partners around the world to think about science-based solutions to address the impediments posed by COVID-19 to their development goals. Also, the effects of COVID-19 and the new economic realities, especially in the Global South, were the focus of the very successful virtual 2021 WIDER Development Conference.

As Chair of the UNU-WIDER Board, it was gratifying to see the impressive progress UNU-WIDER made in 2021 despite the challenging circumstances, as well documented in this Annual Report. In addition to high-quality research and policy work carried out jointly with its partners around the globe, UNU-WIDER released updated versions of three databases which are important public resources for research and policy analysis: on world income inequality, government revenue, and economic transformation.

Looking forward, UNU-WIDER is planning to continue addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic recession as well as other global crises, including climate change, violent conflict, fragile states, and state-building. Together with the WIDER Network – a global community of research and policy partners who are passionate about development and economics – UNU-WIDER is well positioned to do so.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marty Chen".

Marty Chen  
Chair, UNU-WIDER Board  
Senior Advisor, WIEGO  
Adjunct Lecturer, Harvard Kennedy School

# Our work

**U**NU-WIDER provides economic analysis and policy advice with the aim of promoting sustainable and equitable development for all.

We are based in Helsinki, Finland, but operate globally through partnerships and a network of experts, and within the United Nations system. The Institute's aim is to produce knowledge that responds to the needs of people affected by poverty, inequality, and vulnerability, to support better policy-making and implementation at the local, national, regional, and international levels. As a unique blend of think tank, research institute, and UN agency, we are able to create impact across diverse networks and partners.

Our 2019–23 work programme concentrates on a wider concept of development, aimed at overcoming the three challenges of transforming economies, transforming states, and transforming societies.

Through our projects, we aim to contribute to positive change around five Sustainable Development Goals that, we believe, when achieved can unlock the development potential of countries around the world. We do so by working together with in-country research and policy teams in the Global South and by creating 'public good' research, data, and models, that shape the developmental debate.

Our events serve as a forum for open dialogue, bringing together researchers, national decision-makers, and their international partners to discuss key research and policy insights. Whether in Helsinki or away, or even online, UNU-WIDER events reach across the world to include early-career and established academics alike, encouraging knowledge exchange between different generations, disciplines, and regions.

## Vision

The United Nations University World Institute for Development Economics Research (UNU-WIDER) provides economic analysis and policy advice with the aim of promoting sustainable and equitable development for all.

## Mission

To undertake research and policy analysis on the most pressing concerns affecting the living conditions of the world's poorest people.

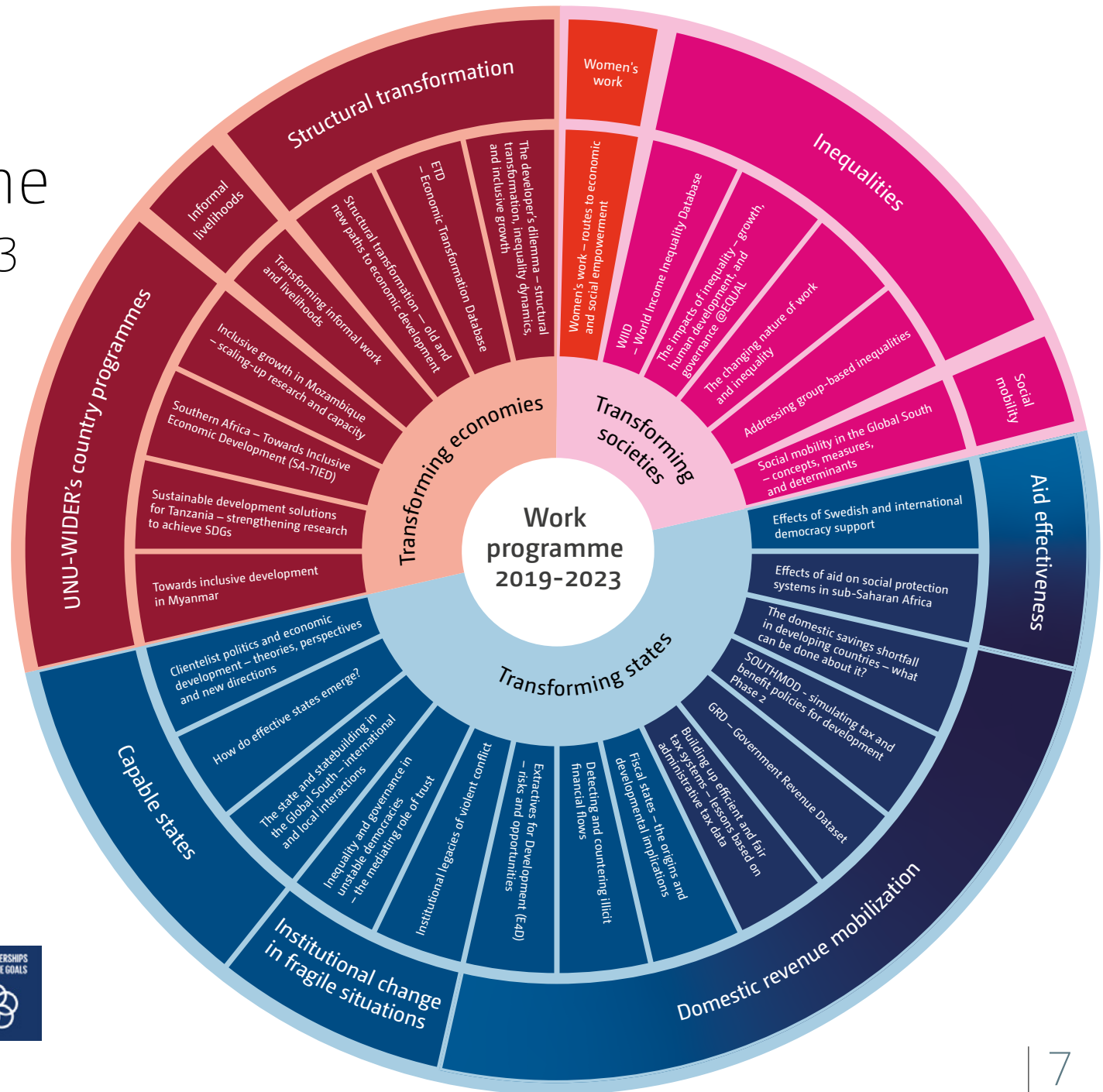
To provide a forum for knowledge sharing, discussion and debate between researchers and development professionals on how to achieve equitable, gender-balanced, and environmentally sustainable policies.

To offer capacity development and training for researchers and decision-makers in economics and social development.

# Work programme 2019-2023

UNU-WIDER's 2019-23 work programme concentrates on a wider conception of development aimed at overcoming the three challenges of transforming economies, states, and societies. These transformations are central to the achievement of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Our work programme maps the three challenges against five key SDGs (5, 8, 10, 16, 17). When these goals are achieved, we believe they can unlock the development potential of countries around the world.





# Data for development

The first of the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) is to end poverty in all its forms, everywhere. The monumental task—a long-time dream of humanity—is followed by 16 more goals under the 2030 Agenda. Though they are all interlinked, to even contemplate their achievement requires a deep well of hope.

Crucially for their achievement, the SDGs are said to represent ‘[an unprecedented statistical challenge](#)’. In addition to the 17 goals, there are 169 targets and 232 accompanying indicators for statistical agencies and specialists to fret over. This is one reason the former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon called for a ‘data revolution for sustainable development’ and convened an Independent Expert Advisory Group in 2014 to [make concrete recommendations](#).

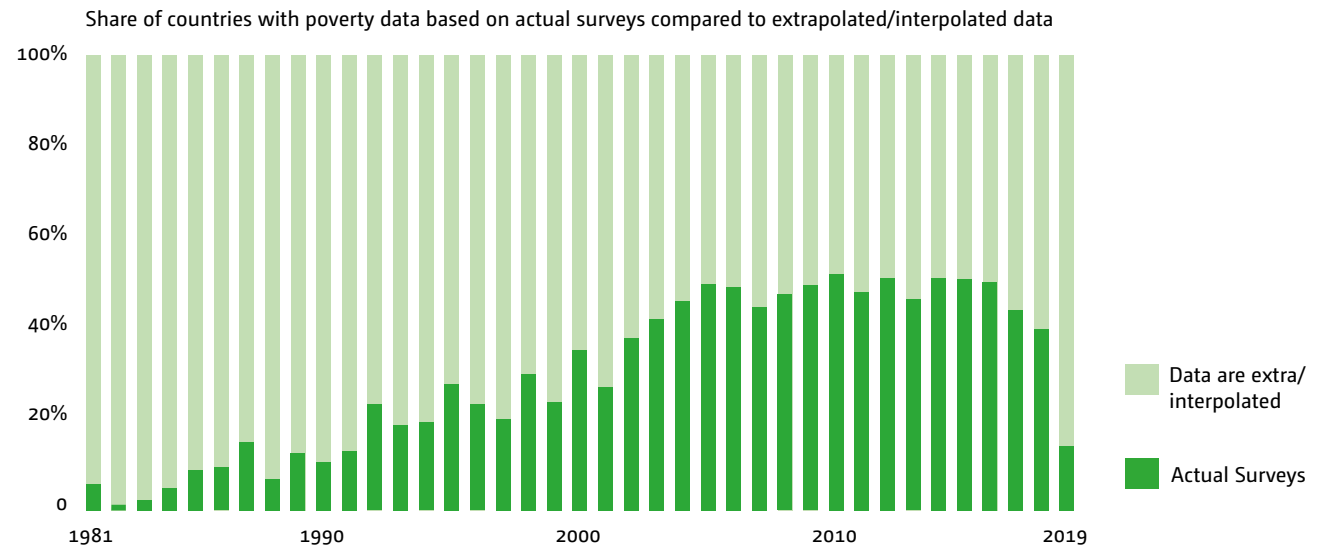


## Overcoming the data challenge

On one hand, a lot more high-quality data are needed just to monitor progress on the SDGs. But even before that, data are critical to conducting useful analysis on what kind of interventions are likely to bring the achievement of the SDGs closer.

In one striking example of the need for better data, two-thirds of the data used to measure global poverty — and therefore progress on SDG1 — is inferred. One of our experts called attention to this ‘underlying monumental problem’ in a [recent article](#). Andy Sumner points out that, ‘the World Bank has over 6,000 distributions in its database but only a third — about 2,000 — are real survey data’. Two-thirds of the country-year pairs in the database, then, are extrapolated or interpolated (see figure below).

### What are global poverty estimates based on?



Source: Above or below the poverty line? Three key questions for understanding shifts in global poverty. The WIDERAngle, 2022.

## Our contributions to the data revolution

At UNU-WIDER, we support the argument that access to data should be a fundamental public right. On this principle – that data are a public good – many national and international agencies make the data they collect or compile freely available. UNU-WIDER's mission and work is no exception. In addition to relying on global data to produce high-quality research that offers actionable insights, our institute is an active participant in the data revolution.

Across the entirety of our current work programme, and indeed our 36-year history, UNU-WIDER's dedication to data advancement – now in pursuit of the SDGs – is ubiquitous. We host, update, and maintain as a public good two of the world's most extensive databases: one on government revenues and the other on inequality. This year, we also partnered with the Groningen Growth and Development Centre to launch the [Economic Transformation Database](#), which provides data on the employment and value-added shares, by sector, for 51 developing countries.

Our [SOUTHMOD](#) project, conducted in partnership with the University of Sussex and SASPRI, brings the EUROMOD software to national policy teams around the Global South. The software makes possible the use of tax-benefit microsimulations by decision makers to compare policy options that might improve social protection. SOUTHMOD has developed this tool with decision makers in Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Viet Nam, and Zambia. The project is a demonstration of how data can be used to promote progress on the SDGs.'

This year, we also celebrate the conclusion of phase one of [Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development \(SA-TIED\)](#), a programme which has made South Africa a data role model for other countries outside the OECD. SA-TIED is a close partnership between UNU-WIDER, South African government departments, and other organizations and institutes. The project demonstrated [how the policymaking and research community can](#)

[work together](#) to securely release national tax administrative data – records on the country's entire set of tax-registered firms and individuals – and produce pioneering economic policy studies with it. With SA-TIED, South Africa became the first low- or middle-income country to release its tax administrative data for research purposes.

As a trendsetting project in this area, SA-TIED demonstrates how research with tax administrative data can improve policymaking. These data were instrumental to new tax and benefit policies in South Africa. They were brought to bear in the national response to COVID-19, which included a new social transfer that reduced national poverty even as the economy faltered from the pandemic's fallout. The data helped provide critical insights on how to bring about more inclusive economic development and advance the SDGs.

The project has been a paragon, inspiring Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia to join us in similar partnerships.

## Hallmark databases

The Government Revenue Dataset (GRD) and the World Income Inequality Database (WIID) are two of our hallmark data projects, ongoing for many years. Originally developed by the International Centre for Tax and Development, the GRD was a response to concerns about revenue data quality and availability. Before the GRD, much of the data on government revenue in developing countries was kept by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and sometimes it was exclusively available to IMF research staff. UNU-WIDER is happy to host, update, and maintain the GRD since 2016.

The choice to do so was partly due to the success of the WIID database, which UNU-WIDER has housed for over 20 years. The WIID and the GRD both demonstrate our commitment to the idea that data is a public good. The WIID collects and stores information on income inequality for developed, developing, and transition countries. It is the most extensive collection of inequality statistics in the world and includes the main data

on income distributions which are available for most countries.

The WIID project is critical for those who wish to understand inequality trends over time and to study its drivers. The WIID is often used in major United Nations reports to monitor progress on SDG10 (reducing inequality).

In 2021 we continued this work by releasing two datasets which standardize, or harmonize, the data in the WIID. These datasets, collectively referred to as the WIID Companion, offer the complete global income distribution over time, as well as national and regional distributions, with observations at the percentile level (the income level of each 1% of the entire world population).

Across the entirety of our current work programme and our history, UNU-WIDER's dedication to data advancement is demonstrable. Through our work, the prospects for achieving the SDGs are meaningfully improved.



## What does ‘promoting sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth’ mean for everyday life?

Erica stands under a rudimentary market stall in Accra, Ghana, selling fruits — she has done this every day for 10 years now. Like many women in the Global South, Erica was only able to attend school for a few years before having to leave to work and support her family. Initially she was training to be a seamstress but stopped when she started her own family. After having her children, she wanted to help to provide for them. Without having finished high school, or her seamstress training, she had limited options, thus she decided to enter the informal labour market by setting up her own business selling fruit.

This sort of work does not come with any insurance, and she is not able to access unemployment or sickness benefits in the case of an emergency. Erica explains that ‘If I do not work for a week, my children will not get food to eat’. Despite this, she enjoys her work and the fact that her business allows her to interact with many people. ‘My customers make me happy’, she says. But she has bigger dreams for her children – ‘I hope they would grow to become a nurse, footballer, and pastor’.

### Decent work for all

The current structure of the informal economy means that Erica cannot feed her children if she does not work at her stall every single day. Erica’s situation is not unusual. In fact worldwide there are over two billion workers in the informal sector, representing 61.2 per cent of the world’s employed population.



Acknowledging the pervasiveness of informal work, [Sustainable Development Goal \(SDG\) 8](#) emphasises the need to promote full employment and decent work for all. For Erica this means work that provides sufficiently for her family, allowing her children to gain an education and have greater opportunities in their futures. On a larger scale, achievement of SDG8 signals important pathways to growth, economic development, and social inclusion.

But how are countries like Ghana, that have many informal workers like Erica, doing in creating better jobs? What can policymakers do to encourage the movement of informal workers to more productive jobs?

To answer these questions, it is crucial to have reliable data on production and employment. This was a problematic data gap until 2020, when UNU-WIDER in conjunction with Groningen Growth and Development Centre (GGDC) compiled a new database. [The Economic Transformation Database \(ETD\)](#) has sectoral value-added and employment data for 51 low- and middle-income countries.

[Preliminary analysis of the data](#) shows that employment in manufacturing – the sector that is most likely to provide high-productivity jobs in large numbers – is increasing in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa, including Ghana. This suggests that there may well be a future for Erica’s children, if not for her, to move out of poverty and to more lucrative income-earning activities. For policymakers this means that a stronger emphasis on industrialization policies may be warranted.

## The developer’s dilemma

But it is not as simple as transitioning everyone from informal jobs to manufacturing. As workers in the Global South move out of agriculture and informal services towards high-value formal services, like manufacturing, a new challenge presents itself – the developer’s dilemma. This refers to the phenomenon that inequality often tends to increase with structural transformation.

So, what can developing countries do to encourage economic development which is inclusive, raising the income of all, especially the poor? [Our research](#) shows that public policies that promote access to primary and secondary schooling for all children and invest in technology and public goods in rural areas can make a difference, especially for future generations, such as Erica’s three children.

Our book, coming in 2022, [The Developer’s Dilemma: Structural Transformation, Inequality Dynamics, and Inclusive Growth](#), provides greater insights through a comparative approach and the experiences of nine developing countries from Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

But what about Erica? She hopes that her fruit-selling business will grow and help her earn more money so she can provide for her family, ‘This work is my future and there’s no other future’. Is Erica continuing to work in the informal sector a bad outcome? While there is evidence to show that higher levels of formality in the labour market support economic development, upon closer inspection we have found that informal labour markets can act as an important space where budding entrepreneurs can build experience and skills. Further, it can provide opportunities for workers to improve their job prospects.

## More nuanced view of informality

Through our [project on informal work and livelihoods](#) we have collected and analysed data from countries across the Global South. Through this we have found the need to take a much more nuanced view of informality, one that differentiates not only between formal and informal, self-employed and wage employment, but also between upper-tier and lower-tier informality. This distinction helps us



Erica at her fruit stand

to understand where those informal workers are who will have a higher likelihood of moving up the job ladder, and into the formal sector.

By sharing our research findings within policy networks we are able to support better, more informed, labour market policymaking. Through this process we can push back on the old notion of Erica’s labour market choices being either staying at her market and living day-by-day, or transitioning to formal work in a factory. Instead, policymakers would be able to develop informed labour market policy that supports the transition of upper-tier informal workers towards formal work, but also supports people such as Erica who are in low-tier informal work to access upskilling opportunities which enable them to become more productive and achieve decent and remunerative work, even while remaining in the informal sector.

SDG8 sets an ambitious task, to promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all. When focused on such an immense goal it can be easy to lose sight of what this means for people’s everyday lives. Listening to the stories of people like Erica, their challenges, dreams for the future, and the future for their children, is an important part of a researcher’s job. It keeps us focused on the role of research beyond writing papers, as part of a process which can support better policy design with implications for the lives and livelihoods of people like Erica, and her family.

# New way to approach economic growth in fragile contexts

**W**eak legal systems, complex regulations, dishonoured agreements, corruption, general disorder - these are just some of the challenges that development agencies working in fragile and conflict-affected states face. What kind of interventions can encourage economic growth in this environment?

While international organizations can make a significant contribution to promoting structural change through their activities, they do not always have the right tools to know what will work. UNU-WIDER researchers wanted to provide development agencies with a systematic way to think through their activities in difficult contexts and design appropriate interventions. The result was [Deals and development in fragile and conflict-affected states](#), a practical guidebook which utilises the deals and development framework in a new way to approach growth in fragile countries.

## What is 'deals and development'?

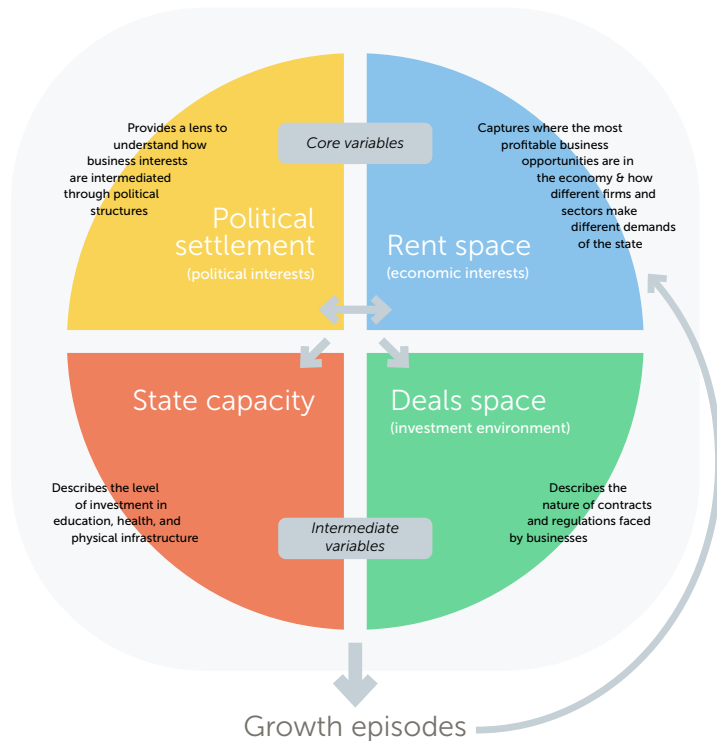
Economic growth is correlated with other measures of human development and provides the basis for meeting basic needs, aspirations as well as spending on public goods.

The deals and development framework is designed to analyse the political economy drivers of growth episodes. However, growth in fragile countries tends to be erratic rather than stable, reflecting a 'boom and bust' cycle. This guidebook enhances the existing framework to incorporate the key symptoms and drivers of state fragility, as well as providing tools for applying the theory into fragile contexts. The ultimate aim of the guidebook is to help bring about positive and sustainable economic growth to improve the prospects for escaping fragility.

To ensure that this ambitious guidebook would be as useful and practical as possible, the design process involved working closely with advisors from the UK's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO). Practitioners currently working in Somalia, South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo provided inputs from their specific country contexts, which were incorporated in the guidebook.

## How does it work?

The guidebook provides an overall framework for analysing the relationship between political economy variables (business and political interests), state fragility, and economic growth. It helps to illustrate how different patterns of growth lead, through feedback loops, to adjustments in the political economy environment.



In addition, the guidebook offers tools for putting the theory into context, including key questions to guide the reader to work through the framework, with practical examples and suggestions for potential interventions, while identifying possible pitfalls.

However, rather than being a 'plug and play' application, the guidebook is meant to guide deep, context-specific analysis by a multi-disciplinary team of advisors and to stimulate new framings of the challenges of growth in fragile states.

The FCDO has already applied the new approach with their World Bank colleagues in Somalia by encouraging more analysis on the private sector and the large firms that dominate the economy in the country. 'The work has helped us in our thinking', says Caroline Slaven, Economic Adviser in

FCDO Somalia office, who was involved in the development of the guidebook. 'The next step is to reach out to large players and use their interests to incentivise a move away from uncompetitive behaviour and diversify their investments'.

*The guidebook is freely downloadable from the [UNU-WIDER website](#).*

## What do our partners say?

*The framework offers a superb way to visualize economic interests within a fragile context.*

**Jonathan Papoulidis**  
Jonathan Papoulidis, Global Director,  
Fragility & Resilience, FH Inc.

*COVID-19 has certainly compounded the fragility and other problems facing many countries in Africa and elsewhere. UNU-WIDER's focus on this book is thus timely and warranted*

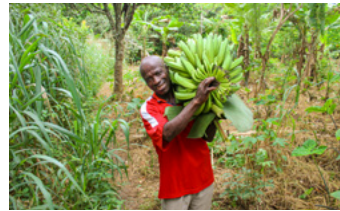
**Aloysius Uche Ordu**, Senior Fellow and Director,  
Africa Growth Initiative at Brookings

# 2021 highlights



VNMOD is one of the eight country-specific tax-benefit microsimulation models in the SOUTHMOD project. In 2021, similar trainings were also held in Ghana, Ecuador, Mozambique, and Tanzania. Since 2015, at least 643 researchers and policy-makers in developing countries have been trained to analyse the impacts of different tax and benefit policy scenarios using the SOUTHMOD models.

**CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:**  
Training on VNMOD – a tax-benefit microsimulation model for Viet Nam



Results from the 2018/19 Ghana Socioeconomic Panel Survey (GSPS) were welcomed by policy-makers in the region as a valuable asset in reflecting on their policy response, and to support their COVID-19 recovery policies. A collaborative project by UNU-WIDER and the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research (ISSER), University of Ghana, the survey covered more than 600 workers across the country.

**REPORT:** How COVID-19 is affecting workers and their livelihoods in urban Ghana

From April to August, the Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development (SA-TIED) programme hosted six online policy dialogues to enhance engagement on pertinent economic and social issues facing Southern Africa and to fuel discussions between academia and policy-makers. Each dialogue covered one major issue from the six different research streams of the programme, which is now coming to the end of its first phase.

**POLICY EVENT:** SA-TIED Dialogues – Research into Policy series



UNU-WIDER experts presented in a global roundtable led by the UN Secretary-General. The high-level event was preceded by five regional roundtables, organised in collaboration with the Regional Economic Commissions and the UN entities working on extractives. The outcomes from the roundtables informed the first-ever policy brief by the Secretary-General on extractive industries.

**EXPERT CONTRIBUTION:**  
UNU-WIDER researchers participate in a global roundtable process on extractives



After taking a break last year due to the pandemic, the WIDER Development Conference returned as a virtual event, providing a platform for research and policy communities across the world to share knowledge on the effects of the pandemic in the Global South. The three-day online event featured 88 sessions including keynote addresses and panel discussions, fireside chats and capacity-building workshops. The conference was well received with over 1200 people from 107 countries joining.

**CONFERENCE:** COVID-19 and development – effects and new realities for the Global South

JAN

FEB

**NEW DATABASE:** GGDC/ UNU-WIDER Economic Transformation Database (ETD)

UNU-WIDER partnered with the Groningen Growth and Development Centre (GGDC) to construct and launch a new database, which provides sectoral data on employment and productivity in Africa, Asia, and Latin America. It allows users to examine patterns and causes of structural transformation and productivity growth in developing economies. At the same time, new UNU-WIDER research utilising the ETD was featured in *The Economist*.



**DATABASE:** Major update to the World Income Inequality Database (WIID)

For more than 20 years, the UNU-WIDER WIID has been used for research on global inequality. The 2021 update included two new inequality databases, known as the WIID Companion, that standardize the world's largest collection of inequality statistics.

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

**CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT:** Training in advanced poverty analysis in Mozambique

In preparation of the Fifth National Poverty Assessment of Mozambique, the Inclusive Growth in Mozambique (IGM) programme was invited to deliver an advanced training course on poverty analysis to the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Faculty of Economics, University Eduardo Mondlane.

**PUBLICATION:** Deals and development in fragile and conflict-affected states

The first UNU-WIDER policy guidebook was released. Co-created with the FCDO, the new guidebook supports development partners working on economic growth in fragile contexts.



SEPT

**JOURNAL SPECIAL ISSUE:** Involuntary Migration, Inequality, and Integration

A collection of research exploring the experiences of global migrants across diverse environments provides valuable lessons on the policies and programmes that can facilitate better and more equitable economic outcomes for migrants.





# 2021 highlights

In the first study of its kind on Africa, researchers in the SOUTHMOD project found that during the first wave of COVID-19 tax and benefit policies provided some limited income protection but failed to offset the increase in poverty. The results, which featured widely in national and international media, provided valuable insights for governments in the Global South trying to navigate through the COVID-19 crisis.

**RESEARCH: The mitigating role of tax and benefit rescue packages for poverty and inequality in Africa amid the COVID-19 pandemic**



In the lead up to COP26, UNU-WIDER organized an online panel discussion with an international group of experts specialising in mining, oil and gas. The discussion focused on the implications of climate policy for gas producers among the developing countries, as well as the environmental damage associated with mining of minerals and metals critical to the technologies underpinning the Net Zero transition.

**EVENT: COP26: Are We Ready?**

As COVID-19 restrictions curtailed plans to have the 2021 Visiting PhD Fellows in Helsinki in-person, the programme was moved online. From September to November, nine PhD fellows worked closely with their UNU-WIDER researcher mentors, benefiting from the opportunity to exchange ideas and interact with UNU-WIDER researchers and each other, receiving feedback and support throughout.

**CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT: Visiting PhD Fellowship online Program**



In the 25th WIDER Annual Lecture, held online for the second year running, Professor Bina Agarwal discussed whether the legal reforms which gave vast majority of women legal equality with men in India have improved women's situation in practice. The first WIDER Annual Lecture in feminist economics, discussed Sakiko Fukuda-Parr called the event series 'a marker in the direction that the field of development economics is going'.

**ANNUAL LECTURE: Women's struggle for land in South Asia: Can legal reforms trump social norms?**

Organised in partnership with the OECD Development Centre, this online panel discussion on developing fiscal states in Africa shared new research findings with 150+ participants from academia, policy networks and development partners, providing an opportunity for critical debate on pressing issues.

**EVENT: Developing Fiscal States in Africa**

## OCT

**CONFERENCE: Achieving Sustainable Development in the Least Developed Countries – LDC Future Forum**

UNU-WIDER partnered with the United Nations Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) in organising a conference as a lead up to UN LDC5. The outcomes included recommendations on financing climate-friendly solutions in LDCs, making debt policies fairer, improving economic performance by closing gender gaps, and building peace in conflict-prone LDCs.



**NEW PARTNERSHIPS: 'Building up fair taxation' programme expanding to new countries**

As part of a larger project aiming to build up efficient and fair tax systems in the Global South, UNU-WIDER established new collaborations with Zambian, Rwandan and Tanzanian tax authorities. Following a similar partnership previously established in Uganda, the aim of the programme is to find policy solutions to increase tax compliance and domestic revenues. Enhancing tax collection will facilitate the provision of better basic services for citizens.

## NOV

**CONFERENCE: IGM Annual Conference 2021**

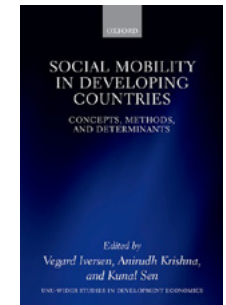
Organized together with the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Mozambique, the conference was held in a hybrid mode in Maputo. 'The economic impacts of COVID-19 in Mozambique and future perspectives' was this year's theme. The event attracted over 100 in-person and online participants, representing key policy-makers in Mozambique and national and international academics and development practitioners.



## DEC

**BOOK: Social mobility in developing countries**

In a new agenda-setting book, an interdisciplinary team of experts from around the world examine what we (don't) know about social mobility in developing countries. The authors argue that meeting the Global Goals will require the international community to move beyond its focus on poverty and inequality reduction and towards a social mobility-focused research agenda.



# 2021 in figures

## 289 publications

Journal articles	33
WIDER Working Papers	191
WIDER Background Notes	2
Book chapters	32
WIDER Technical Notes	22
WIDER Reports	9

**59%**  
co-authored by a woman

**44%**  
co-authored by a researcher from and based in the Global South

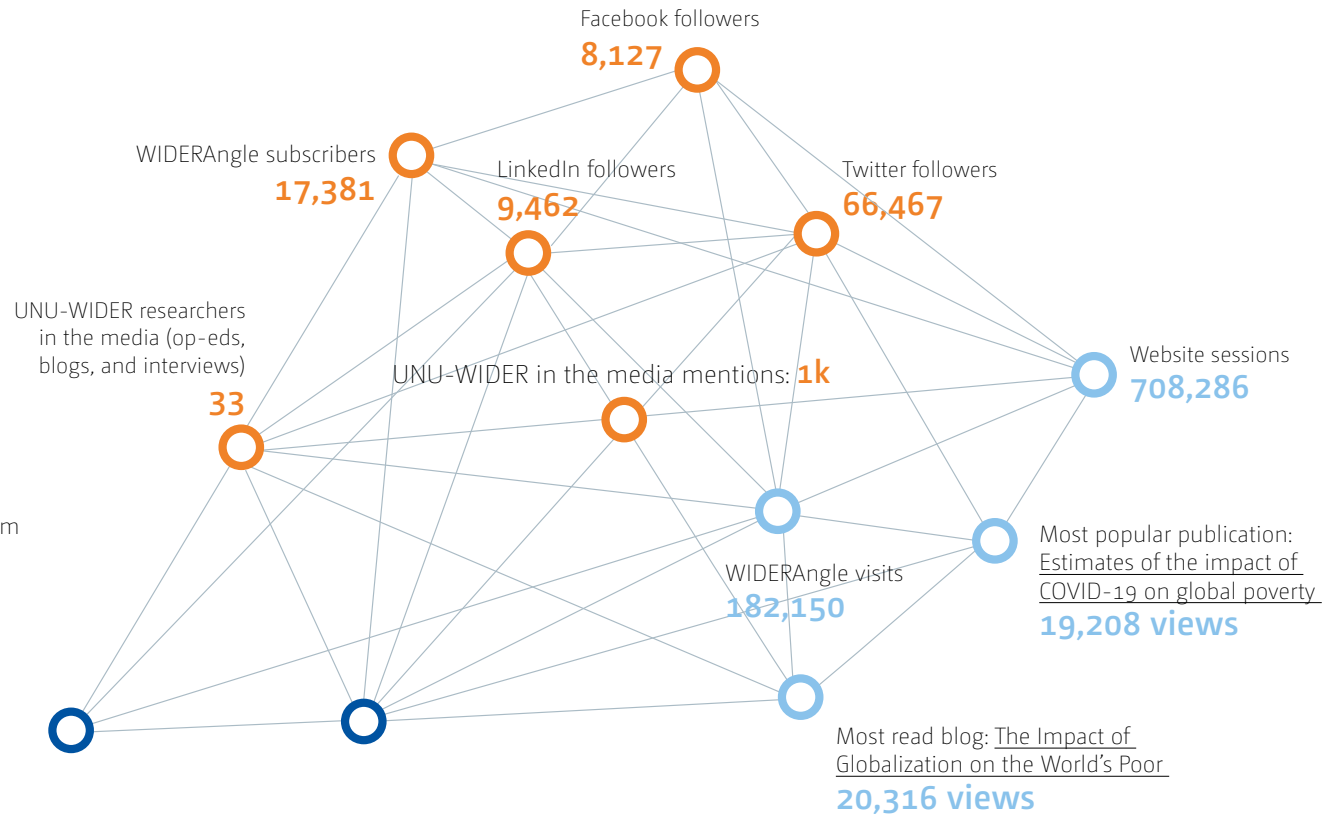
## 162 events

Large conferences	4
WIDER Annual Lecture	1
Policy workshops	16
Research seminars	35
Project workshops	18
Technical trainings	16
Presentations	72

**248** participants in technical trainings

**35%**  
women

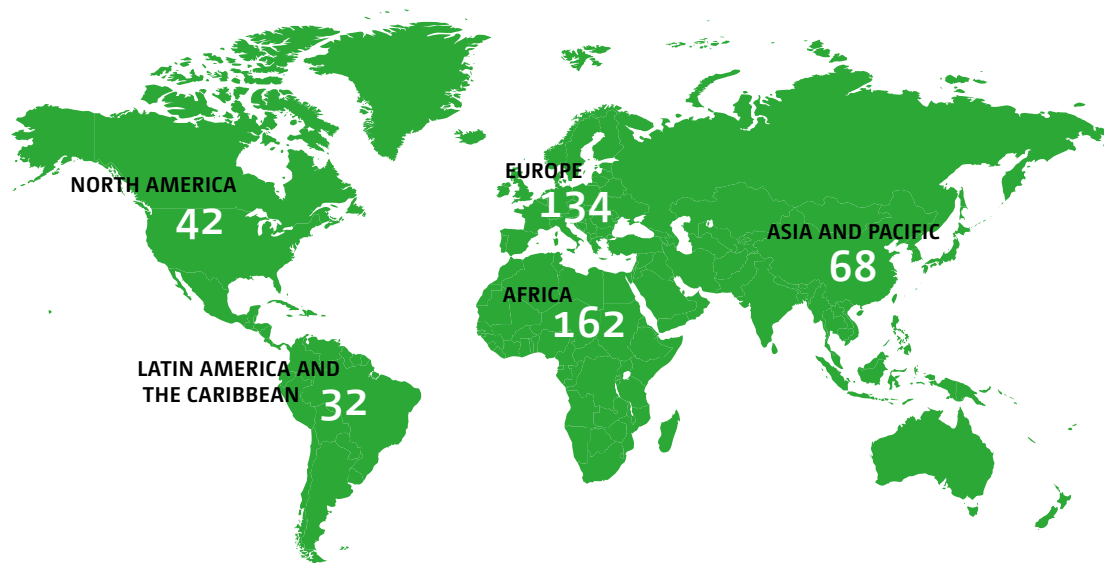
**95%**  
nationals of Global South countries



# 2021 in figures



## Nationality of the 438 external researchers contributing to UNU-WIDER projects



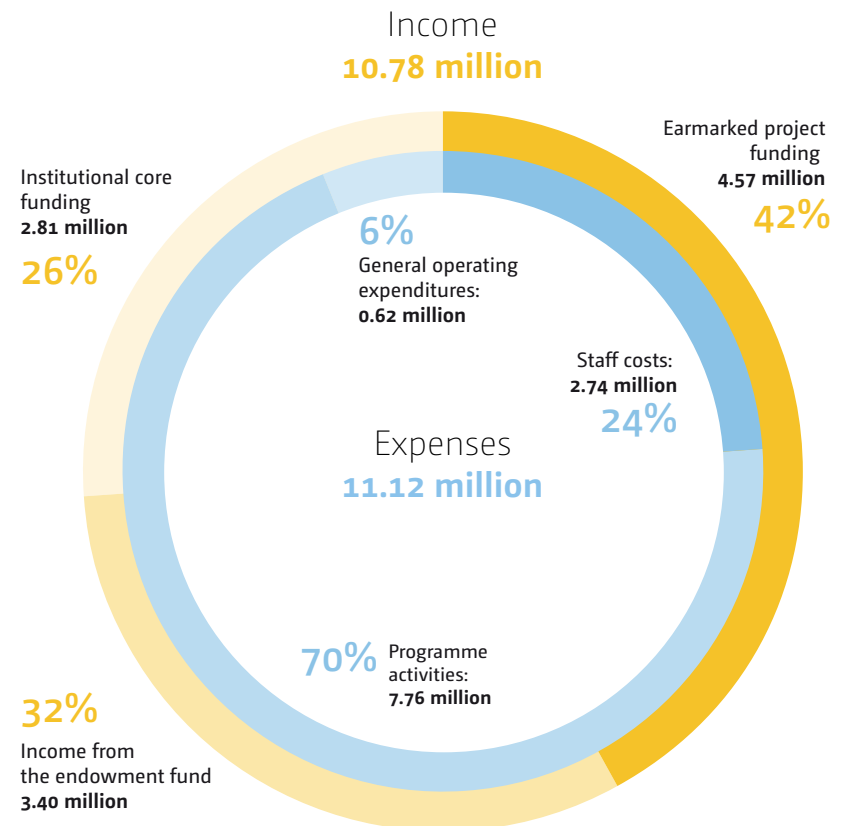
**70**  
different nationalities

**38%**  
are women

**59%**  
nationals of Global South countries



## Financials (in US\$)



# 2021 in pictures





# The WIDER Network

The WIDER Network is known to bring together local, national, and global research and policy communities allowing for highly diverse and novel ideas to flourish and enable a rich exchange of analysis and experience across continents.

The network was not originally 'designed' nor has it been directed at any stage in its development. On the contrary, it has been driven by demand and grown organically. Through decades of research collaborations, policy support, and events across continents, UNU-WIDER has developed a network of individuals with diverse backgrounds from the Global South and North who are passionate about development and economics. These engagements have been pivotal in the reach and impact achieved by the Institute.

In 2021, the WIDER Network included 438 external researchers and 55 institutional partners, who contributed with their expertise to UNU-WIDER's research projects. They were based all over the world, with many in Least Developed Countries (LDCs).

## South Africa: Duncan Pieterse

Duncan was the Deputy Director-General: Economic Policy at the National Treasury of South Africa in 2021, responsible for the National Treasury's partnership in our [SA-TIED](#) programme.



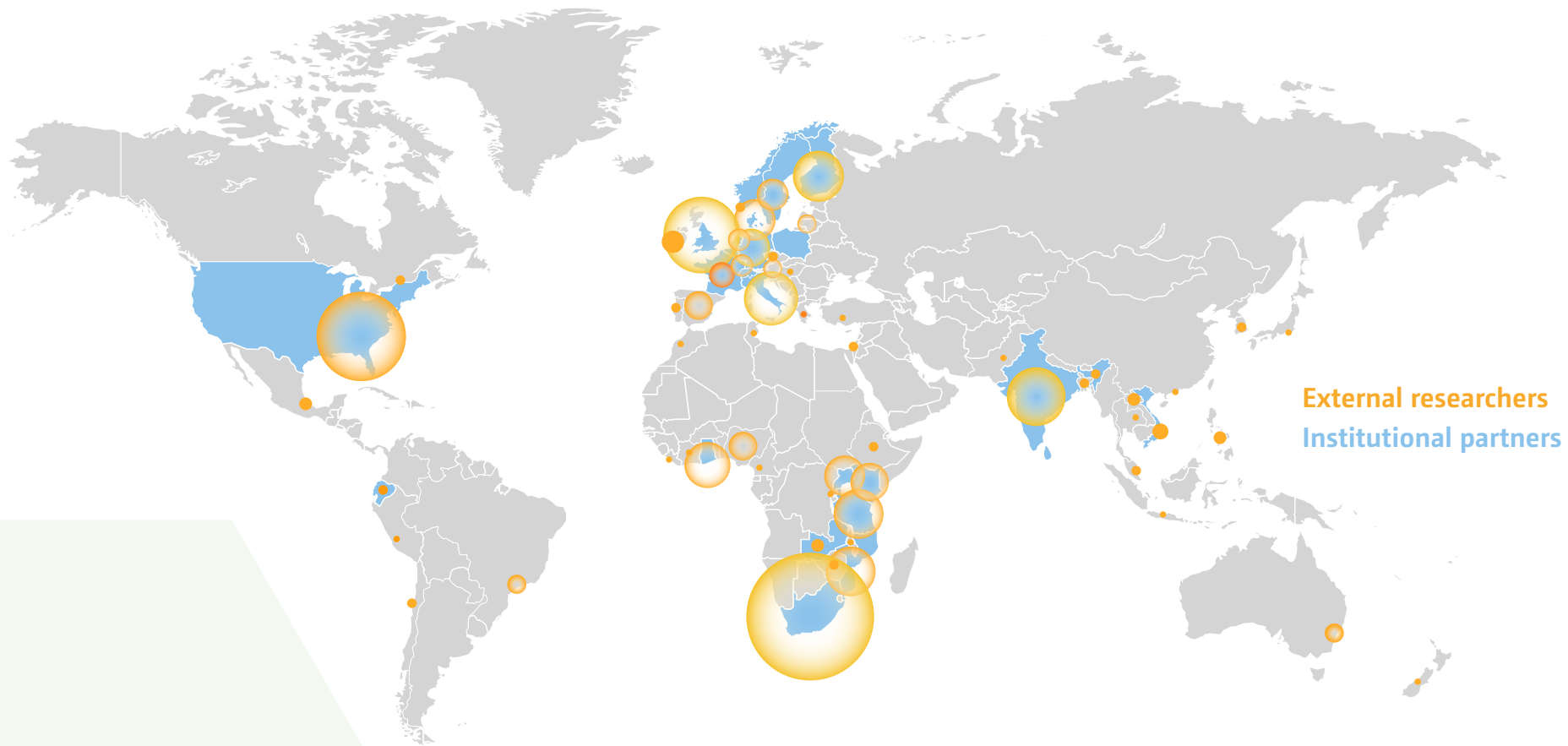
Through the SA-TIED programme, UNU-WIDER has been able to leverage an extensive network of policy practitioners and academics to support the creation of a robust evidence base for some of South Africa's most pressing policy dilemmas. Beyond world class research, the programme contributed enormously to building various economic policy and data capabilities in the South Africa government that will continue to have a positive impact for many years to come.



## United States of America: Yuen Yuen Ang

Yuen Yuen is a political scientist and China scholar at the University of Michigan. She currently contributes to our [project](#) on the origins and development of fiscal states.

UNU-WIDER harnesses scholarly research to address policy-relevant issues; e.g., how should governments in Africa build up fiscal capacity? It also provides an indispensable platform for disseminating insights from research for a globally-minded audience, which serves a crucial role in a time of divisions.



### 438 external researchers



**58**  
based in Least Developed Countries  
(LDCs)

### 55 institutional partners



**8**  
based in Least Developed Countries  
(LDCs)

## Canada: Eric Werker



Eric is the William Saywell Professor at the Beedie School of Business at Simon Fraser University. He co-authored our policy guidebook [Deals and Development in Fragile and Conflict-Affected States](#), published in June 2021.

“*UNU-WIDER enabled us to increase the scope and reach of our research on the political economy of private sector development in fragile states. The team at UNU-WIDER brought together thought leaders and practitioners to bring operational insights into our guidebook project, while simultaneously building out a related research program on Institutional legacies of violent conflict.*”

## Uruguay: Martina Querejeta



Martina is currently undertaking her PhD in economics at Universidad Nacional de La Plata in Argentina. She took part in our 3-month [Visiting PhD Fellowship](#) online programme in 2021.

“*My experience at UNU-WIDER came during a key stage of my PhD journey, i.e., when I was writing the first chapter. UNU-WIDER helped me overcome this challenge and face the next steps with confidence. This experience provided me with a state-of-the-art insight of research in development economics that broadened the scope of my research agenda.*”

## Netherlands: Gaaitzen de Vries



Gaaitzen is the lead researcher in a collaborative project between Groningen Growth and Development Centre (GGDC) and UNU-WIDER. He co-authored a research paper on manufacturing renaissance ([WIDER Working Paper 28/2021](#)), the findings of which were featured widely in the media, including *The Economist*.

“*These findings re-opened the debate about the patterns of industrialization currently under way in developing countries and challenged the long-held view that the developing world is de-industrializing. It was great to be part of the research team and I look forward to more fruitful collaboration on the new ETD database in the coming years.*”





## **Zambia: Laban Simbeye**

Laban is Assistant Director for Statistics and Data Analytics in the Research department of the Zambia Revenue Authority.

*As a tax expert and a PhD candidate, I like working with UNU-WIDER because its approach is collaborative and engaging. The mutually beneficial relationship goes beyond publishing a paper or sharing data, to providing meaningful professional support with some academic rigour. I am particularly excited to connect through the UNU-WIDER network with other tax experts and students across the world.*



## **India: Tanu Gupta**

Tanu is currently undertaking her PhD at the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research, India. She was one of the visiting online PhD Fellows in 2021.

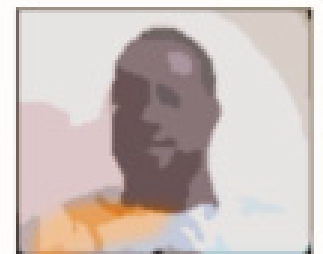
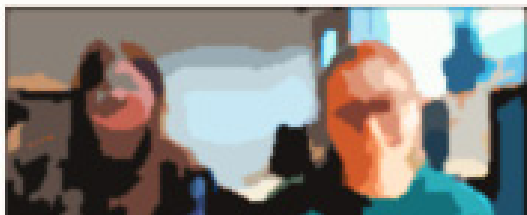
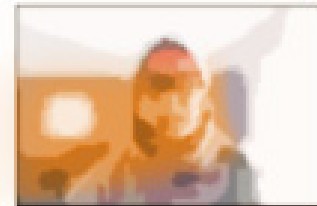
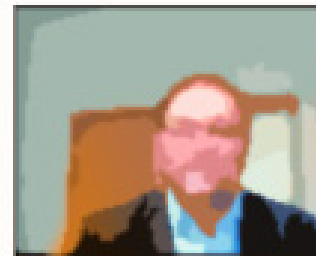
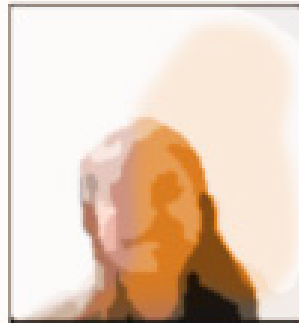
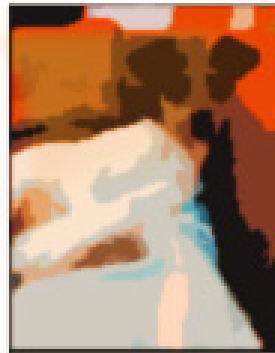
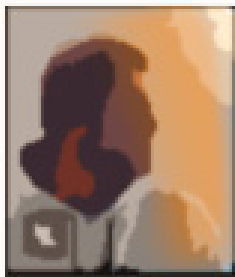
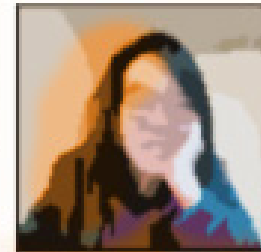
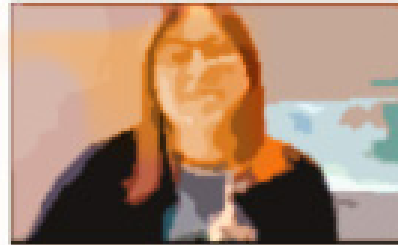
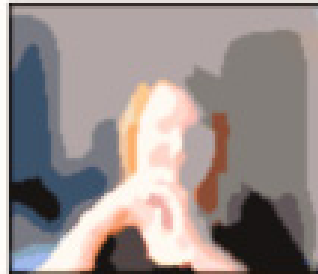
*This programme provided me with an opportunity to connect with researchers from diverse backgrounds and to seek meaningful feedback on my work. I regularly attended research seminars that were insightful and thought-provoking. Across all the programmes which I have attended during my dissertation, this programme by far has been the standout and most memorable. It indeed has been a pleasure for me to be a part of such a wonderful programme.*

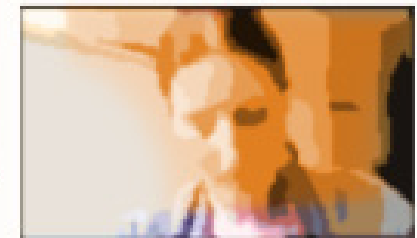
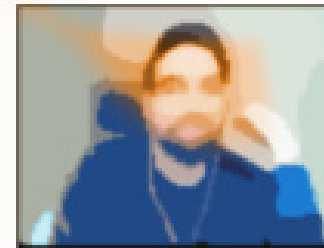
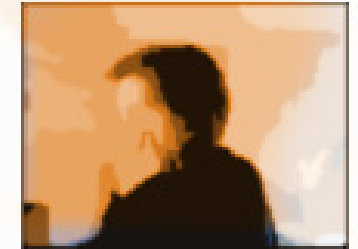
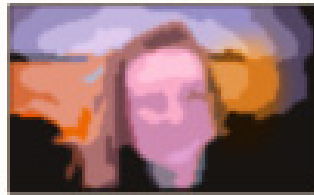
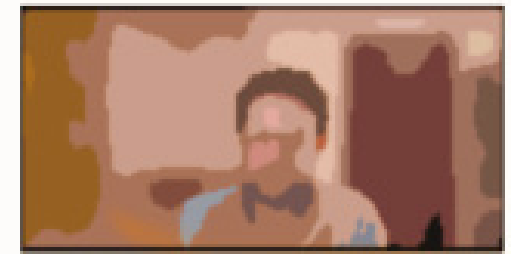


## **Viet Nam: Minh Tran**

Minh is the Deputy Director of the Department for General Economic Issues and Integration Studies at the Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM) in Hanoi. Since 2017, her institute has supported the development and usage of VNMOD, the tax-benefit microsimulation model for Viet Nam.

*Being part of the SOUTHMOD family has been a great pleasure for my organisation as well as myself. The knowledge transferred and collaborative efforts with various partners from different corners of the world have enriched my understanding and experiences. The VNMOD has also been reaching out to the broader economist community in Viet Nam.*





# Thank you for being part of the WIDER journey!

In 2022, we strive to contribute further to transforming economies, states, and societies through high-quality, policy-relevant research, focused capacity development initiatives, and by providing a forum to discuss and debate our research findings and policy recommendations with our many stakeholders.



With much gratitude, we acknowledge the support from the governments of Finland, Norway, Sweden, South Africa, and the European Union for our activities in 2021.



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