The King Center on Global Development is a Stanford University research center that works to help improve the lives of people living in poverty around the world. We enable a multidisciplinary community of Stanford scholars to conduct path-breaking research; we inform current debates and help shape effective policy and practice; and we train and inspire a diverse new generation of global leaders.

Research insights generated by faculty, students, and researchers of Iliad with the King Center not only help to provide a better understanding of critical issues—\[\ldots\]—they also contribute to creating scalable solutions and aid in their effective deployment.

Our annual report is an opportunity to take stock and reflect on how we are doing. This year, we are especially proud to share with you progress from our programs to support and train the next generation of scholars.

Our new one-year Practical Research Fellows Program, which strives to bring a diverse mix of recent college graduates from low- and middle-income countries to Stanford, continues to flourish and has become a model on campus; \[\ldots\] and in the larger global development community. We welcomed a cohort of five new predoctoral Fellows this year. It has been exciting to host and mentor many young researchers who are passionate about studying global poverty alleviation, who are learning from our community of scholars, and who are immersing themselves in their research teams and campus life.

In 2022, we welcomed two new outstanding predoctoral fellows, Jihan Riaño Rodriguez from the University of British Columbia and Karmini Sharma from the University of Warwick. We also said goodbye to two scholars: Augustin Bergeron, who began his new role as an assistant professor of economics at the University of Michigan; and Naveen and Karmini, who are learning from our community of scholars, and who are immersing themselves in their research teams and campus life.

For the past five years, the King Center has had the great privilege of convening \[\ldots\]. We do so by fostering \[\ldots\] understanding the pervasive impacts of \[\ldots\].

Supporting Stanford faculty continues to be a core objective of the King Center. Our multidisciplinary \[\ldots\] bring together faculty from across the university to examine critical issues in global development, such as \[\ldots\].
The King Center’s Postdoctoral Fellows Program provides new PhD recipients the time and flexibility to incubate ambitious research leading to successful academic careers. Over the next two years, they will immerse themselves in King Center initiatives, gaining valuable training and research experience before applying to PhD programs and continuing their paths to becoming the next generation of leaders in global development.

The King Center’s Predoctoral Fellows Program supports the emerging research of exceptional students conducting full-time research at institutions in the United States and abroad. With the support of the Predoctoral Research Fellows Program, students have the opportunity to gain hands-on learning experience through the center’s research assistantship programs. Faculty and Affiliates mentor students conducting research and middle-income countries incorporate students into their research teams and work closely with the Predoctoral Fellows in order to conduct research using a range of methodologies and tools, from machine learning to statistical analysis to communicating impacts for internal review.

Increasing Women’s Electoral Representation in India

For the past two years, Somer Khambu Bryant, ’22, has worked with Assistant Professor of Political Science Solal Artiz Prillaman to examine the electoral success of women in India. The research assistantship provided an opportunity for Bryant to approach development through a critical lens and to familiarize herself with South Asia.

“This question led Prillaman and Bryant to explore a database of elected officials across local governments in India. Once completed, this data will allow other researchers analyzing the reasons why women in India have lower rates of community political participation to understand the conditions under which female elective representatives work to implement policies preferred by women. “It’s been one of the best experiences I’ve had at Stanford,” Bryant said. “It’s definitely shaped my future ambitions.”

Bryant is now helping to create a comprehensive database of elected officials across local governments in India. Once completed, this data will allow researchers to better understand the conditions under which female elective representatives work to implement policies preferred by women. “It’s been a really important lesson for me at Stanford,” Bryant said. “It definitely shaped my future ambitions.”

Predoctoral Fellows

Predoctoral Fellows are researchers who work with and learn from a cohort of the next generation of scholars and leaders in global development. Each year, new Predoctoral Fellows join the King Center to apply their skills and experiences to various research projects. The King Center’s Predoctoral Fellows Program is focused on applying to PhD programs and continuing their paths to becoming the next generation of leaders in global development.

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Research by Faculty Affiliate Alberto Diaz-Cayeros and Grant Miller that shows how aging pipe systems and a dearth of investment in sanitation infrastructure compromise the health benefits of water disinfection was highlighted in VoxDev.

Research by Faculty Affiliate Will Tarpeh examines how sulfide, a toxic byproduct of wastewater filtering, can be converted to chemicals used in fertilizer or batteries while creating drinkable water.

A study of policies in Brazil, Colombia, and Costa Rica by Faculty Affiliate Eric Lambin outlines a series of coordinated interventions to slow deforestation through public and private collaboration.

Faculty Affiliate Dana Foarta's work on vote-buying by politicians in the US and Kenya finds that voters who receive payments from politicians are less likely to hold politicians accountable for stealing public funds and was featured in a VoxDevTalk.

The Economist highlighted a large-scale analysis conducted by the researchers from the Migration and Development Initiative showing that the vast majority of African migrants plan to stay in Africa rather than move to Europe.

Faculty Affiliate Jason Andrews shows that crowded prisons in Brazil amplify the spread of tuberculosis and that mass screenings of incarcerated people are an efficient way to reduce spread in prisons and surrounding communities.

Affiliated researcher Michael Machala, PhD '17, developed a solar-powered technology that smallholder farmers in India can use to improve the quality and quantity of dried agricultural produce.
Faculty Programs and Initiatives

The King Center has more than 120 affiliated faculty, representing all seven of Stanford’s schools. From the Department of Anthropology to the School of Engineering, students have the opportunity to work with experts from across disciplines on global development challenges.

One goal of the King Center’s Data for Development initiative (D4D) is to inspire students to tackle sustainable development challenges using new data and new methods in machine learning and data science. After participating in a class sponsored by the initiative, a team of students created a machine-learning tool to encourage new ways to measure progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The tool, named SustainBench, is designed to lower the barrier to entry for researchers to train new models that can provide support for governments, international organizations, and local NGOs on poverty levels, potential for hunger or malnutrition, and access to clean water at a very localized scale.

SustainBench fills a void between academic disciplines: most machine-learning researchers don’t focus on socio-economic development, and most development economists don’t work on machine learning. The King Center funding has enabled us to generate very valuable preliminary data that has already yielded interesting results and is forming the foundation for new collaborations to better understand vulnerable populations in the COVID-19 pandemic.

SustainBench is a visit in the academic disciplines; most machine-learning researchers don’t focus on development issues, and most development economists don’t work on machine learning. “The SDGs are arguably the most urgent challenge facing the world today,” Meng said. “They require domain-specific knowledge from machine learning, computer science, environmental science, and economics. It makes sense that we are working together to figure out ways to provide better insight into monitoring the SDGs.”

“Tapsoba, assistant professor of Economics, joined the Stanford School of Economics at the Toulouse School of Economics, Université Toulouse 1 Capitole, and spoke with undergraduates.

STANFORD KING CENTER ON GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

Visitors and Events

“The King Center regularly convenes researchers, students, policymakers, and private-sector leaders from around the world to share knowledge, explore new partnerships, and promote evidence-based policies and practices. Last year, the Center’s quarterly events brought together nearly 2,000 people, with more than 2,156 people attending from at least 27 countries. Event topics included supply chain disruptions caused by COVID-19, innovative ways for business to reduce the spread of coronavirus through strategies toward more resilient and sustainable supply chain development.

Next 10 Years in Education Policy

“The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated an education crisis in low- and middle-income countries, and the impact on human capital is likely to be long lasting. The King Center hosted David E. Kennedy, senior fellow at the Center for Global Development, and Norpumehelo Mphahlele, head of the World Bank Group’s Africa Regional Development Block, for a conversation on the state of learning and education systems in the Global South during COVID-19, with a focus on how to build back after the disruptions caused by the ongoing pandemic.

Augustin Tapsoba, Assistant Professor of Economics, Toulouse School of Economics, Université Toulouse 1 Capitole.

“...when I visited the King Center, I was stunned by the diversity of the participants. It was inspiring to see the passion with which everyone was working to solve global challenges. I was impressed by the level of engagement and the dynamic atmosphere. It was clear that the King Center is at the forefront of global development research and education. My visit at the King Center allowed me to share my work in a writer’s audience and get feedback from leading researchers in my field. It was a game-changer for me in terms of visibility within the broader research community and allowed me to connect with amazing new collaborators, whom I am now working with on exciting new projects.”

— Augustin Tapsoba, Assistant Professor of Economics.
Financials and Support

King Center Funding Sources FY22

- endowed payouts: $3,636,687
- endowed shares sales: $1,051,952
- gifts: $321,414
- university central: $616,281
- university partnerships & transfers: $128,670

Total: $5,949,612

King Center Funding Uses FY22

- research support: $3,014,380
- student programs: $673,652
- training programs & visitors: $936,141
- dissemination & outreach: $328,692
- operations & development: $659,875

Total: $5,662,739

Detailed Uses of Funds ratio:
- 1% Visitors
- 5% Predoctoral Research Fellows Program
- 11% Postdoctoral Fellowships Program
- 5% Undergraduate Programs
- 7% Graduate Student Programs
- 28% Research Initiatives
- 23% Faculty Research
- 6% Dissemination & Outreach
- 12% Operations & Development

With COVID restrictions lifting, the King Center was able to resume supporting hands-on research around the globe, and our spending grew 21.7% in 2021-2022 compared to the previous year. In the 2022 fiscal year, the King Center’s training programs also grew substantially, as we welcomed a second cohort of Predoctoral Research Fellows and expanded our fellowship and research grants to students who were eager to resume field work. The King Center is grateful to its generous supporters who make it possible for the center and its affiliates to consistently innovate in research and training, and to help inform global development policies and practices. Looking ahead, we intend to sustain our programs for the next generation of global scholars and our support for faculty and student research and experiential learning opportunities. We look forward to sharing gift opportunities with our supporters in the coming year.

King Center Fellows

POSTDOCTORAL FELLOWS

- Marcellino A. Aiello
- Rui Kidani
- Robert McClelland
- Yen Phan
- Andrew Polito
- Anand Prakash
- Rohit Batra

PREDOCTORAL RESEARCH FELLOWS

- Christiane Chirongui
- Shreya Choudhury
- Ziaur Rahman
- Shreyasi Sanyal
- Myrtha Manzani
- Yudhishtra Singh

RONALD I. MCKINNON MEMORIAL FELLOWS

- Beatrice Low
- Pritam Singh

NAMED FACULTY FELLOWS

- Christelle D. Elmera
- Diego Toacre
- Baelish Birong
- Uwe Rickert
- S. Victor Chauhan
- Atharvane Dhulikhel