Views of Government Decision-Makers and Influentials on the Role of Research Organisations in International Development

Findings from China, France, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S.
I. INTRODUCTION

The **Building Support for International Development** study provides a roadmap for the development community to connect more meaningfully with key constituencies in donor-country discussions about international development policy issues and priorities. The study, launched by InterMedia in 2011 with support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, included qualitative and quantitative research with three key target groups:

**INTERESTED CITIZENS**
Members of the public who are predisposed to engagement with international development issues, based on their self-reported interest in global health and international development issues, and their previous participation in activities in support of development causes (such as donating, volunteering, writing to public officials, etc.). The research included national urban surveys with 3,824 interested citizens and focus group discussions with 160 interested citizens in China, France, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S.

**INFLUENTIALS**
Citizens with the potential to influence decisions by government officials on development policies. 88 in-depth interviews were conducted with influencers in China, France, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S.

**GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKERS**
Elected and appointed officials in government and on parliamentary committees in France, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S., who are engaged in forming, implementing and overseeing policies on international development and global health. Due to political sensitivities and time constraints, no interviews were conducted with government decision-makers in China. 40 in-depth interviews were conducted with government decision-makers in France, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S.

The **Building Support for International Development** study covers the four largest bi-lateral aid donors—France, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S.—as well as China, which is fast becoming a major player in the aid arena.

All research reports based on this study are available on InterMedia’s **Building Support Portal** at www.audiencescapes.org/buildsupport. They include:

- The main report, which covers the key findings for each of the target groups;
- Five detailed country reports;
- Four topic reports on the role of celebrities, public opinion, research organisation and non-profit organisations in international development.

This report focuses on the perceptions of **government decision-makers** and **influentials** in China, France, Germany, the U.K. and the U.S. on the role of research organisations in international development. For the purpose of this analysis, research organisations are defined as **academic research institutions** and **think-tanks**. Inter-governmental organisations such as the United Nations, the International Monetary Fund, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, World Bank and their subsidiaries are not covered in this report nor are non-profit organisations, such as donor-country foundations, international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) and faith-based organisations. The role of non-profit organisations is discussed in detail in a companion report **Views of Government Decision-Makers, Influentials and Interested Citizens on the Role of Non-profit Organisations in International Development** (Topic report 3/4).

It is important to note that views expressed by the interviewees were not country specific; thus the findings in this report are organised thematically rather than by country. However, where the differences between the countries did occur, they are highlighted and explained in this report.

For more information about the **Building Support for International Development** study, or to arrange a customized Building Support workshop, contact:

Klara Debeljak
Associate Director
InterMedia
debeljak@intermedia.org
tel: +44.207.831.8724

---

This report is based on research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

© 2012 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. All Rights Reserved.

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is a registered trademark in the United States and other countries.
Research organisations are valued by government decision-makers primarily for their ability to provide reliable and detailed analysis of development issues and objective research-based evidence that supports their policymaking efforts on international development issues. Research organisations are considered highly trustworthy, and universities, in particular, are viewed as objective and generally agenda-free.

The insights they provide are typically used by government decision-makers in conjunction with complementary input provided by various government departments and members of their personal networks, multilateral inter-governmental institutions as well as a plethora of international and donor-country NGOs, that supply government decision-makers with up-to-date information on developments on the ground.

Government decision-makers tend to rely particularly on their national think-tanks and academic research organisations; only a few have cross-border appeal. These include U.K. think-tank Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the U.S. based Center for Global Development (CGD), which tend to be consulted by government decision-makers from a range of thematic areas and across countries.

“When I want to form an opinion on an issue, I look for publications by university professors and that influences me, as do publications and analyses by other experts.”
- (French government decision-maker)

“Yes, the charities and the think-tanks, these are important addresses.”
- (German government decision-maker)

“Beyond my professional contacts with both people in the U.S. government and in African governments, I would go to people in American research institutions and academia. In order to prepare for a recent trip to Nigeria, for example, I had a couple of lengthy phone conversations with American political scientists who had studied Nigeria and went to visit one at the local university. So the academia is important to me.”
- (U.S. government decision-maker)

“I think that the journalists and the think-tanks, the NGOs and the multilateral organisations have different perspectives on the same issue and if you don’t look at all of them you’re going to get a funny perspective on the issue.”
- (U.S. government decision-maker)
OBJECTIVITY AND INDEPENDENCE MOST VALUED QUALITIES OF RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

Research organisations are perceived as highly reliable and trustworthy providers of information on international development issues. Unlike NGOs, that are viewed by some government decision-makers as often promoting their own narrow and sometimes hidden agendas, research organisations are generally considered to be highly independent, objective and reliable sources of policy-relevant materials.

Often, these perceptions are partially based on government decision-makers’ relationships with and trust in individual academics, rather than institutions as a whole. Many interviewees singled out individual “star” academics or representatives of major think-tanks, who they regularly follow and trust. These include Center for Global Development’s Nancy Birdsall and Owen Barder, Oxford University professor Paul Collier, Harvard University’s Michael Kremer, Michael Marmot from University College London, Steve Morrison of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), New York University’s William Easterly, and Paul Krugman at Princeton University.

Providers of empirical data and in-depth analysis

Government decision-makers turn to research organisations for empirical data and objective in-depth analysis that informs their policymaking. Their input is perceived as more factual and concise, than materials supplied by non-governmental organisations. This appeals to time-pressed government decision-makers who already struggle with information overload. Some interviewees also noted research organisations as sources of new and unique ideas not provided by other entities with a stake in development issues.

“There are a variety of interest groups in the food security area, there are the whole range of universities, particularly U.S. universities, who are heavily interested in this area and have big investments in food security. There are also the think tanks and the big foundations, the groups that are very focused on these issues; their views are extraordinarily influential.”
- (U.S. government decision-maker)

“(There are a variety of interest groups in the food security area, there are the whole range of universities, particularly U.S. universities, who are heavily interested in this area and have big investments in food security. There are also the think tanks and the big foundations, the groups that are very focused on these issues; their views are extraordinarily influential.)
- (U.K. government decision-maker)

“(One of them is Paul Collier, who’s a professor at Oxford. Nancy Birdsall, the Head of the Center for Global Development in Washington. Owen Barder, who’s also at the Center for Global Development is a big voice. Michael Kremer, a professor at Harvard is also a very powerful voice - he has generated a lot of the ideas that have been then picked up. Among professional [development] thinkers, that is the group of people I would pick out.)
- (U.K. government decision-maker)

“The think-tanks and the academia play an important role, their peer review papers and journals are an extremely important source.”
- (U.S. government decision-maker)

Overall, government decision-makers prefer to rely on domestic research institutions; the Center for Global Development and Overseas Development Institute emerged as the only two research organisations with strong cross-border appeal. This is in line with the findings of the 2011 The Global Go To Think Tanks Report, prepared by the University of Pennsylvania, which ranked both think-tanks as the world’s second and third top international development think tanks, respectively, based on their contribution to governments and civil societies worldwide. The list was topped by the Brookings Institution, which interestingly was mentioned by only one government decision-maker interviewed for this study.

“[Information from organisations] where they have done solid empirical research and there is data and statistical analysis- this is very helpful.”
- (U.K. government decision-maker)

“[Information from organisations] where they have done solid empirical research and there is data and statistical analysis- this is very helpful.”
- (French government decision-maker)

“(The think-tanks and the universities have the benefit of having time for reflection, probably more so than we do. In the government we are pulled in so many directions, so many meetings and responding to enquiries, so it’s hard to spend time to reflect.)
- (U.S. government decision-maker)

“Think-tanks and the academia play an important role, their peer review papers and journals are an extremely important source.”
- (French government decision-maker)

“There are also research centres at universities, such as the FERDI, attached to Auvergne University or Paris 1, which is linked to the Sorbonne University. They are useful for us in terms of the data they provide and food for thought.”
- (French government decision-maker)

PRESTIGE FOR DOMESTIC RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS

Government decision-makers turn to research organisations for empirical data and objective in-depth analysis that informs their policymaking. Their input is perceived as more factual and concise, than materials supplied by non-governmental organisations. This appeals to time-pressed government decision-makers who already struggle with information overload. Some interviewees also noted research organisations as sources of new and unique ideas not provided by other entities with a stake in development issues.

“There are also research centres at universities, such as the FERDI, attached to Auvergne University or Paris 1, which is linked to the Sorbonne University. They are useful for us in terms of the data they provide and food for thought.”
- (French government decision-maker)

“Think-tanks and the academia play an important role, their peer review papers and journals are an extremely important source.”
- (French government decision-maker)

Overall, government decision-makers prefer to rely on domestic research institutions; the Center for Global Development and Overseas Development Institute emerged as the only two research organisations with strong cross-border appeal. This is in line with the findings of the 2011 The Global Go To Think Tanks Report, prepared by the University of Pennsylvania, which ranked both think-tanks as the world’s second and third top international development think tanks, respectively, based on their contribution to governments and civil societies worldwide. The list was topped by the Brookings Institution, which interestingly was mentioned by only one government decision-maker interviewed for this study.

It is also important to note, that government decision-makers did not name any specific non-western think-tanks or universities which they liaise with on a regular basis.

Research organisations mentioned by government decision-makers*

**SOURCES**

![France](image1.png) ![Germany](image2.png) ![UK](image3.png) ![US](image4.png)

**REPRESENTATIVES OF RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS AS CHAMPIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**FRANCE**

**AMARTYA SEN**
Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University

**JEFFREY SACHS**
Director of Earth Institute at Columbia University

**NANCY BIRDSALL**
Founding President of the Center for Global Development

**WILLIAM EASTERLY**
Professor of Economics and Co-Director of the Development Research Institute at New York University

**GERMANY**

**DAMIBSA MOYO**
Academic currently not associated with an academic research institution

**MICHAEL KREMER**
 Gates Professor of Developing Societies in the Department of Economics at Harvard University

**MICHAEL MARINOT**
Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London

**NANCY BRODSAL**
Founding President of the Center for Global Development

**WILLIAM EASTERLY**
Professor of Economics and Co-Director of the Development Research Institute at New York University

**U.K.**

**MICHAEL KREMER**
Gates Professor of Developing Societies in the Department of Economics at Harvard University

**MICHAEL MARINOT**
Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London

**NANCY BRODSAL**
Founding President of the Center for Global Development

**WILLIAM EASTERLY**
Professor of Economics and Co-Director of the Development Research Institute at New York University

**OWEN BARDER**
Director of Europe at the Center for Global Development

**PAUL COLLIER**
Director for the Centre for the Study of African Economies at the University of Oxford

**ROBERT WINSTON**
Professor, medical doctor and scientist currently not associated with an academic research institution

**STEPHEN HAWKING**
Research Director at the University of Cambridge’s Centre for Theoretical Cosmology

**U.S.**

**CATHERINE BERTINI**
Professor of Public Administration and International Affairs at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University

**DR. ROBERT L. THOMPSON**
Senior Fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and professor emeritus for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**GERMANY**

**DAMBISA MOYO**
Academic currently not associated with an academic research institution

**MARTIN KREMER**
Gates Professor of Developing Societies in the Department of Economics at Harvard University

**MICHAEL MARINOT**
Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London

**NANCY BIRDSALL**
Founding President of the Center for Global Development

**WILLIAM EASTERLY**
Professor of Economics and Co-Director of the Development Research Institute at New York University

**JEFFREY SACHS**
Director of Earth Institute at Columbia University

**NANCY BRODSAL**
Founding President of the Center for Global Development

**WILLIAM EASTERLY**
Professor of Economics and Co-Director of the Development Research Institute at New York University

**U.K.**

**MICHAEL KREMER**
Gates Professor of Developing Societies in the Department of Economics at Harvard University

**MICHAEL MARINOT**
Professor of Epidemiology and Public Health at University College London

**NANCY BRODSAL**
Founding President of the Center for Global Development

**WILLIAM EASTERLY**
Professor of Economics and Co-Director of the Development Research Institute at New York University

**OWEN BARDER**
Director of Europe at the Center for Global Development

**PAUL COLLIER**
Director for the Centre for the Study of African Economies at the University of Oxford

**ROBERT WINSTON**
Professor, medical doctor and scientist currently not associated with an academic research institution

**STEPHEN HAWKING**
Research Director at the University of Cambridge’s Centre for Theoretical Cosmology

**U.S.**

**CATHERINE BERTINI**
Professor of Public Administration and International Affairs at the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University

**DR. ROBERT L. THOMPSON**
Senior Fellow at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs and professor emeritus for the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

* The size of the bar indicates the relative number of times that each research organisation was mentioned.

**These organisations are included as think-tanks in the Global Go To Think Tank Index published by the University of Pennsylvania and has thus been considered a research organisation for the purpose of this report.

**The size of the bar indicates the relative number of times that each individual from a research organisation was mentioned.
### Communications channels

**1.3 KEY FORMS OF DIRECT ENGAGEMENT**

Much of the *direct interaction* between government decision-makers and research organisations happen on an *ad-hoc basis and in irregular intervals*, either at various events (e.g., conferences, seminars) or through a network of personal contacts. Personal networks are considered by the decision-makers as the most trusted channel of obtaining information on development issues and are typically also one of the first ports of call when they need to verify information obtained from other sources.

Direct engagement of government decision-makers and research organisations is also facilitated through more structured, formal consultations and working groups on specific policy issues. This is initiated by government departments and designed to engage interest groups in policy development, or bilateral cooperation agreements with selected (typically larger) think-tanks and academic institutions.

> “There are various institutions [we get information from], for example, the German Institute for International and Security Affairs and the German Institute for Development Policy, where I know people and with whom I try to maintain a regular exchange of information; not weekly, but several times a year, also in an indirect way. Either I take part in events there or I invite them for personal discussions about certain subjects.”
> - (German government decision-maker)

> “I worked in the Democratic Republic of Congo for several years, so I have a lot of contact with people in that country as well as some research groups there and folks who are particularly interested in what’s going on in Congo.”
> - (U.S. government decision-maker)

> “We have a contracted relationship with Chatham House, who deal with lots of things around health security. So we might get some insights from them.”
> - (U.K. government decision-maker)

**1.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF PASSIVE ELECTRONIC SOURCES**

E-mail correspondence, analytical reports published on the websites of prominent research organisations, newsletters and *selected blogs* are the key "passive" sources of information that help decision-makers keep up to date with the work of research organisations relevant to their areas of focus. These materials are often intercepted and first digested by the decision-makers’ junior staff who filter out information on their behalf, thus effectively acting as the main information gatekeepers.

Blogs are used by a minority of government decision-makers, and those followed most regularly are typically written by development experts who are associated with a prominent academic institutions and think-tanks in the offline research world. They include individuals such as Lawrence Haddad, the director of the Institute of Development Studies; Chris Blattman, assistant professor of Political Science and Economics at Yale university and William Easterly, professor of Economics at New York University, who were mentioned by the interviewees in France and the U.K. The U.S. and German government decision-makers did not quote any specific blogs written by the research organisations or their representatives.

> “I don’t tend to get information of my own, I would get someone who works for me to do that.”
> - (U.K. government decision-maker)

> “Like any citizen, I’m interested in topical issues, but with my professional work, I am interested in university research and publications of international organisations, so I go directly to their websites, I don’t need any intermediaries.”
> - (French government decision-maker)

> “Some of the blogs that I follow are at academic institutions. The University of Sussex’s blog is one and I also closely follow the blogs by the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and the Centre for the study of African Economies at the University of Oxford.”
> - (U.K. government decision-maker)

> “I use the Center for Global Development blog and the blog by William Easterly.”
> - (French government decision-maker)

> “I would say that I subscribe to a lot of think-tanks for e-mail updates. For example, the update by the International Food Policy Research Institute is one that I look at frequently.”
> - (U.S. government decision-maker)
2 Influentials

2.1 Overview

Similar to government decision-makers, influentials turn to research organisations primarily for objective, statistical data and independent, in-depth analysis on development issues. However, unlike government decision-makers, influentials tend to be more open to both new, alternative sources that are not yet part of their information network, as well as information provided by research organisations from the South. Nevertheless, western research organisations still dominate the list of preferred sources with a handful of sources such as the Center for Global Development, Overseas Development Institute, and the Institute of Development Studies mentioned by influentials across multiple countries.

On the other hand, research organisations – apart from selected “star” academics and development experts – are not considered prominent champions of development issues. A few individuals, such as the director of The Earth Institute at Columbia University Jeffrey Sachs, and professor at Columbia University Joseph Stiglitz, are seen as having the ability to influence the discussions on development issues outside of the research community and beyond cultural and country boundaries.

Overall, influentials’ views on the role of research organisations in international development were fairly consistent regardless of the thematic area they focus on, or the type of organisation they work for – the media, NGOs, foundations, international organisations, faith-based institutions, or research organisations. Influentials tend to seek information from their own organisation first. They generally perceive research organisations as a valuable resource of information that is complementary to the input obtained from other sources, such as NGOs, government institutions, multilateral organisations as well as the contextual and background information from the mainstream media.

2.2 Benefits of research organisations

INFLUENTIALS’ PERCEPTIONS OF RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS MIRROR THE VIEWS OF GOVERNMENT DECISION-MAKERS

Independence, objectivity, reliability. These are the three key qualities of research organisations most valued by influentials, who rely on these organisations for information on development issues. The statistical data and in-depth analysis of development issues generated by prominent research organisations, particularly academic institutions, are generally considered of higher quality and more thoroughly researched than materials produced by other organisations, such as NGOs and the mainstream media. Peer-reviewed journals published by research organisations are particularly valued for their rigorous systematic review processes, which ensure that the information is sufficiently scrutinised and that the final output is of high quality. In addition, research organisations are often used by influentials to cross-check the materials obtained from other sources.

“...If someone is an academic, who publishes in peer-reviewed journals, [which] have a very rigorous review process, then that person is probably pretty credible.”
- (U.S. influential)

“I would say that scientific journals (are more credible) because at least the review committee has scrutinised what’s going to be published.”
- (French influential)

“To me the most credible sources are publications of reputable scientists or reputable research institutes.”
- (German influential)

“The most trustworthy to me are the research reports from research institutes and official organisations (such as the UN).”
- (Chinese influential)

“I follow some of the think-tanks and there are certain individuals I follow very closely, because I admire their work and I think their analysis is - even if I don’t agree with it - thoughtful and contains meaningful information.”
- (U.S. influential)

The longevity of the organisation also appears to influence the perceived credibility of research organisations. Older, well established research organisations, and those with long-term reputations as providers of reliable research, tend to be viewed as more credible than younger organisations. Nevertheless, influentials are much more open to accept information from newer organisations or alternative sources than government decision-makers.

RESEARCH ORGANISATIONS FROM THE SOUTH A SOURCE OF FRESH PERSPECTIVES

While the majority of influentials across thematic areas and countries rely primarily on the western research organisations, some interviewees, also turn to a selected number of research organisations from developing countries, particularly when they are looking for an alternative perspective from those who are closer to developments on the ground. The full list of these organisations cited by influentials across the five countries is shown on page 8.

“There are a few think-tanks, predominately Anglo-American, that I look at, but not inclusively. There’s an Indian think-tank called International Centre for Research on International Economic Relations, which I know very well and use.”
- (UK influential)

“They are credible because they are in the field and know what one is looking for. When I look for information about Africa, then this is the most credible source for me.”
- (German influential)

“(For example,) if I was looking for something on urban issues in Africa, I might go to the University of Cape Town in South Africa.”
- (US influential)
Research organisations mentioned by influentials

Chinese Academy of Social Sciences
Beijing Normal University
Beijing University (The Center for Human and Economic Development Studies)
Brookings Institution
Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Center for Strategic and International Studies
International Institute for Strategic Studies
US National Bureau of Economic Research
Stockholm Institute of Peace
Social Resources Institute
Overseas Development Institute
Center for Global Development
International Crisis Group**
John Hopkins School of Public Health and Human Rights
Stockholm Environment Institute
World Resources Institute
Wellcome Trust***
Woodrow Wilson Institute
European Centre for Development and Policy Management
Overseas Development Institute (ODI)
German Development Institute
German Institute for International and Security Affairs
 Berkman Centre of Internet Studies at Harvard University
 Bonner International Center for Conversion
 CATO Institute
 Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa
 European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes
 European Council on Foreign Relations
 Frankfurt School at the University of Frankfurt
 German Society for Foreign Policy
 House of Finance at the University of Frankfurt
 Hudson Institute
 Humboldt University
 Institute of Development Studies
 International Department of SPÖ IGW Institute Hamburg
 International Institute for Strategic Studies
 London School of Economics and Political Science
 Royal Institute for International Affairs
 Sudwind Institute
 University of Bayreuth
 University of Leipzig
 Chatham House
 Institute of Development Studies
 London School of Economics
 Overseas Development Institute
 Adam Smith Institute
 Aeras
 Center for Global Development
 Fabian Society
 Eldis
 European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
 The John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University
 Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations
 Institute for Child Health
 Institute for Public Policy Research
 Medical Research Committee
 National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence
 Nottingham University
 University of Oxford
 Royal African Society
 Columbia University
 University of Sussex
 Wellcome Trust***

* The size of the bar indicates the relative number of times that each research organisation was mentioned.

** These organisations are included as think-tanks in the Global Go To Think Tank Index published by the University of Pennsylvania and has thus been considered a research organisation for the purpose of this report.

*** Mentioned as a research organisation rather than a non-profit by interviewees and was thus considered a research organisation for the purpose of this report.
2.3 Channels of communication

“We regularly exchange information with research organisations. I receive several hundred e-mails every day.”
– (Chinese influential)

Unlike government decision-makers, influentials typically don’t rely on a separate department within their organisation or junior staff to pre-filter the information coming their way. They tend to be much more active seekers of information than government decision-makers. Aside from relying on newsletters and other regular updates sent out by the research organisations, they regularly visit the research organisations’ websites and actively seek out articles published by these sources elsewhere on the internet. However, it is important to note that not all materials received via e-mail updates and newsletter subscriptions are read. Some influentials commented on the large amount of information they receive, and it is clear that not all of the information is necessarily digested.

When searching for materials on a specific topic or validating information obtained from other sources, influentials are more likely to turn to trusted individuals in their personal and professional network, who work for research organisations, to obtain regular, and typically, informal feedback. Finally, while they do not occur as frequently as influentials would like, formal channels such as face-to-face meetings, conferences, and seminars are essential tools that allow influentials to engage in discussions and exchange ideas with research organisations in a more structured setting. They also provide influentials the opportunity to expand and strengthen their professional networks.

“Internet is very important [and provides] easy access to the newspapers, to blogs, to the information. The information also comes from institutional websites who mail us newsletters, for example the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Johns Hopkins School of Public Health, who will send us their Medicines for Malaria Venture newsletter.”
– (French influential)

“Yes, our institute has subscribed to newsletters that I receive, but [I do] not personally [subscribe]. We receive newsletters from ODI in London, the European Centre for Development Policy Management in Maastricht, from the Institute of Development Studies in Sussex, and many more.”
– (German influential)

“The Council on Foreign Relations also does a news digest, which is largely the reason why I subscribe, as well as getting information about upcoming publications and events; basically to keep on top of what’s happening in a manageable, digestible way.”
– (U.S. influential)

“Some of my friends work in the research organisations and share information with me.”
– (Chinese influential)

“Paul Collier, who is professor at Oxford, has been a good friend of mine for 40 years, and if he sends me an e-mail with a paper I will tend to read it because I have an enormously high opinion of him and his work, which is always interesting.”
– (U.K. influential)

“It is less the case that we have a university [that] we have a close exchange with. It is more certain figures from universities who are close to us, based on their research; a relationship has developed with those.”
– (German influential)

“If I find a piece of information that another friend of mine in the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences [might find useful], I will send the information to him. We share information with each other.”
– (Chinese influential)
A number of individual “star academics” or “star development experts” from research organisations were viewed by influentials as either current or future champions for international development. Their key advantage is their expert knowledge of a specific development issue, coupled with a charismatic personality, and supported by the reputation of the institution they belong to.

The list of champions from research organisations cited by influentials from the five countries include:

- **AMARTYA SEN**
  Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University
- **YUAN LONGPING**
  Academic currently not associated with a academic research institutions
- **CHEN CHUNMING**
  Professor Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention
- **PAUL GARNER**
  Head of the International Health Group at Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine
- **JOSEPH STIGLITZ**
  Professor at Columbia University
- **ROGER WEBBER**
  Formerly of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- **AMARTYA SEN**
  Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University
- **NOAM CHOMSKY**
  Institute Professor and Professor (Emeritus) in the Department of Linguistics & Philosophy at MIT
- **CIILJA HARDERS**
  Professor and Head of the Center for Middle East at Free University of Berlin
- **ADRIAN LEWTICH**
  Senior Lecturer in the Department of Politics at the University of York
- **JEFFREY SACHS**
  Director of Earth Institute at Columbia University
- **ERNEST ULRICH VON WEIZSÄCKER**
  Dean of the Bren School of Environmental Science & Management at the University of California, Santa Barbara
- **JAGDISH BHAGWATI**
  Professor of economics and law at Columbia University
- **ESTHER DUFO**
  Abdul Latif Jameel Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics in the Department of Economics at MIT
- **DAVID HEYMANN**
  Head and Senior Fellow of the Centre on Global Health Security at Chatham House
- **MICHAEL KREMER**
  Gates Professor of Developing Societies in the Department of Economics at Harvard University
- **DAMBIYA MOYO**
  Academic currently not associated with a academic research institutions
- **AMARTYA SEN**
  Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University
- **NICHOlAS STERN**
  IG Patel Professor of Economics and Government, Chair of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics (LSE)
- **JEFFREY SACHS**
  Director of Earth Institute at Columbia University
- **MICHAEL BEST**
  Associate Professor at the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs and the School of Interactive Computing at Georgia Institute of Technology
- **ESTHER DUFO**
  Abdul Latif Jameel Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics in the Department of Economics at MIT
- **DAVID HEYMANN**
  Head and Senior Fellow of the Centre on Global Health Security at Chatham House
- **MICHAEL KREMER**
  Gates Professor of Developing Societies in the Department of Economics at Harvard University
- **DAMBIYA MOYO**
  Academic currently not associated with a academic research institutions
- **AMARTYA SEN**
  Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University
- **NICHOlAS STERN**
  IG Patel Professor of Economics and Government, Chair of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics (LSE)
- **JEFFREY SACHS**
  Director of Earth Institute at Columbia University
- **MICHAEL BEST**
  Associate Professor at the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs and the School of Interactive Computing at Georgia Institute of Technology
- **ESTHER DUFO**
  Abdul Latif Jameel Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics in the Department of Economics at MIT
- **DAVID HEYMANN**
  Head and Senior Fellow of the Centre on Global Health Security at Chatham House
- **MICHAEL KREMER**
  Gates Professor of Developing Societies in the Department of Economics at Harvard University
- **DAMBIYA MOYO**
  Academic currently not associated with a academic research institutions
- **AMARTYA SEN**
  Professor of Economics and Philosophy at Harvard University
- **NICHOlAS STERN**
  IG Patel Professor of Economics and Government, Chair of the Grantham Research Institute on Climate Change and the Environment at the London School of Economics (LSE)
- **JEFFREY SACHS**
  Director of Earth Institute at Columbia University
- **MICHAEL BEST**
  Associate Professor at the Sam Nunn School of International Affairs and the School of Interactive Computing at Georgia Institute of Technology
- **ESTHER DUFO**
  Abdul Latif Jameel Professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics in the Department of Economics at MIT
- **DAVID HEYMANN**
  Head and Senior Fellow of the Centre on Global Health Security at Chatham House
- **MICHAEL KREMER**
  Gates Professor of Developing Societies in the Department of Economics at Harvard University
- **DAMBIYA MOYO**
  Academic currently not associated with a academic research institutions

The size of the bar indicates the relative number of times that each individual from a research organisation was mentioned.
For influentials, and even more so for government decision-makers, access to objective and robust data and in-depth analysis is crucial for informed decision-making. While both groups already rely heavily on research organisations (as well as some other entities, such as the World Bank) for this information, further steps can be taken in order to optimise their engagement:

- **First**, both groups – but particularly government decision-makers – often complain about being supplied with too much information that is not sufficiently concise or not specific to their area of work. A succinct, easily accessible and regular digest of studies relevant to their focus area (health, agriculture, gender issues, microfinance, etc.) will help them reduce the information clutter, keep them up to date with relevant research studies, and strengthen their links with the research organisations.

- **Second**, both groups, but particularly influentials, would benefit from more regular and structured opportunities to engage with research organisations working on issues of interest to them. These forms of engagement will strengthen the existing connections with research organisations and help influentials expand their professional networks with the research community.

- **Third**, more regular engagement should be promoted particularly with academic institutions and think-tanks from the South, to ensure that decisions are informed by those who are closer to developments on the ground and can provide a fresh perspective.

III. CONCLUSION
ABOUT INTERMEDIA

InterMedia (www.intermedia.org) is a global research and consulting group providing strategic guidance and insight on effective engagement and networking strategies online and offline. A not-for-profit social enterprise, InterMedia equips clients to communicate and connect effectively with communities worldwide.

Based in Nairobi, Kenya; Washington, D.C.; and London, U.K.; InterMedia has worked in more than 100 developing countries. InterMedia research experts use innovative techniques to understand how information, communication and media resources can deliver impact.


JOINING THE DISCUSSION: THE BUILDING SUPPORT PORTAL

You can share reactions to the Building Support study as well as exchange ideas with interested parties and stakeholders in the global development policy community on InterMedia’s Building Support Portal at www.audiencescapes.org/buildsupport and on Twitter at #supportfordev.