

United Nations University

World Institute for Development Economics Research

Annual Report 2024



**UNU
WIDER**



UNU
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40

The power of shared knowledge

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Foreword by the Director

The role of original research in shaping a sustainable future



In a world increasingly shaped by interlinked global challenges, robust development research plays a pivotal role in finding solutions. UNU-WIDER, as a development economics research institute with a large network of experts, is uniquely positioned within the UN framework to address critical issues such as inequality, conflict, and fiscal instability. Over the past year, our contributions to rethinking a reform to the international financial architecture and engaging in global policy dialogues have showcased how focused research can drive significant changes in development agendas. This impact highlights UNU-WIDER's ability to extend its influence beyond its size, thanks to original research from our colleagues in Helsinki and around the world.

The pressing need to confront these challenges—and the growing threats to multilateralism and evidence-based knowledge—cannot be overstated. At UNU-WIDER, we believe that rigorous research forms the backbone of truth and informed decision-making, leading to the best possible outcomes. As we navigate these turbulent times, we remain committed to fostering international cooperation and amplifying diverse perspectives to shape effective development strategies. Supported by a strong network of global partners, our work seeks not only to address immediate crises but also to lay a foundation for sustainable and inclusive development.

As we reach the halfway mark of the 2030 Agenda, the call for intensified efforts has never been clearer. Ongoing conflicts and persistent fiscal crises underscore the need to prioritize peace, stability, and economic resilience.

In this context, UNU-WIDER's research on inequality, peace, and fiscal policies is more important than ever. By proposing innovative solutions and offering fresh perspectives, we help redefine development paradigms and tackle the complexities of our time. This year, we launched our 2024–27 work programme at our flagship WIDER Development Conference held in Maputo, Mozambique—a country facing a multitude of development challenges and a long-standing partner in our IGM programme.

Moreover, this year's WIDER Annual Lecture featuring Gabriel Zucman, and other engagements have brought to the forefront discussions on progressive taxation and wealth redistribution, essential components of addressing global inequality and strengthening domestic revenue mobilization. Our active participation in international platforms, such as the process ahead of the 4th International Conference on Financing for Development, and collaborations with institutions like the OECD,

UNDP, and UN DESA underscore our commitment to influencing global policy at the highest levels.

The coming year offers significant opportunities to expand our impact, particularly through partnerships with emerging scholars and policymakers from the Global South. Their unique perspectives are vital as we strive to amplify voices often sidelined in global policy discussions. This engagement goes beyond capacity development; it reflects our dedication to fostering inclusivity and diversity in shaping global economic policies.

The coming year offers significant opportunities to expand our impact, particularly through partnerships with emerging scholars and policymakers from the Global South.

As the Director of UNU-WIDER, I am optimistic about the future we are building together. The challenges we face are immense, but with the continued support from our funding partners—including the European Union, Finland, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom—the potential for impactful research to guide us is immense. We are well-positioned to make a significant contribution to a more equitable and sustainable future.

In conclusion, UNU-WIDER's role in the global development landscape continues to evolve as we respond to emerging challenges and seize new opportunities. Our steadfast commitment to high-quality research and actionable policy insights remains unwavering, driven by our foundational belief in the power of knowledge to foster a better world. As we move forward, we will continue to inspire action, advocate for change, and contribute thoughtful insights to the pressing issues of our time.



Kunal Sen
Director, UNU-WIDER

Message from the Chair of the WIDER Board

Reflecting on 40 Years

**The role of UNU-WIDER
for the development research community**



UNU-WIDER turns 40 in 2025. Throughout the year, we will celebrate the longevity and achievements of UNU-WIDER. As the current Chair of the WIDER Board, I want to commend the commitment of UNU-WIDER—its staff, affiliated scholars, and partners—to improving the lives of the poor, especially in developing countries, and building a more equitable and sustainable future for everyone. I also appreciate UNU-WIDER for its willingness to engage across social sciences to provide a platform for research on the frontiers of economic development and development economics.

Martti Ahtisaari, former President of Finland and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate, co-founded UNU-WIDER in Helsinki in 1985. A lifelong advocate for UNU-WIDER’s mission, Ahtisaari explained why such an organization was needed as follows: ‘there was a need for a sustained and international effort to produce high-level research and in-depth understanding on how the global economic system works, and how that affects the demanding needs of developing countries’. Since its founding, Finland, UNU-WIDER’s host country, has been a loyal supporter of the institute—and played a crucial role in its achievements. This commitment to supporting high-quality, impactful research has enabled UNU-WIDER to persevere—even through challenging times.

Amartya Sen, the Nobel Laureate in Economics, was another co-founder of UNU-WIDER. In an interview on the occasion of UNU-WIDER's 30th anniversary, Sen noted that the name 'World Institute for Development Economics Research' was chosen, in part, for its acronym 'WIDER'. As Sen explained, the founders sought 'to take a wider, and a more inclusive approach to research and view of the world'. Their vision was that UNU-WIDER should be open to considerations of equity and ethics and of education and health, not just economic growth, and be open to other disciplines.

I had the privilege of being involved, as an anthropologist, in a couple of UNU-WIDER projects in the early days. The first was a conference in the 1980s to discuss the first UNU-WIDER publication—*Hunger and Public Action* by Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen, which remains, to this day, its signature publication. The second was a conference in the early 1990s on women, culture, and development, with a focus on universal values, by the philosophers Martha Nussbaum and Jonathan Glover. I presented a paper, later published in the edited conference volume, entitled 'A Matter of Survival: Women's Right to Employment in India and Bangladesh', in which I made the case for the universal right to gainful employment during crises in societies where some groups of women are not traditionally allowed gainful employment outside the home. These early projects, which focused on the ethical dimension of development and combined rigorous theory with illustrative case studies, formed the DNA of UNU-WIDER.

UNU-WIDER has remained true to the vision of its founders. It remains a development economics research and policy institute dedicated to the challenges faced by countries in the Global South. It continues to take an expansive view of development economics that does not focus only on economic growth and the economics discipline but also on wider ethical and equity concerns and other social sciences. Its research continues to inform policies aimed at reducing inequality, promoting sustainable growth, and improving lives worldwide.

UNU-WIDER has remained true to the vision of its founders. It remains a development economics research and policy institute dedicated to the challenges faced by countries in the Global South.

While remaining true to the core vision and values of its founders, UNU-WIDER has been able to adapt its research priorities and policy strategies to respond to significant global shifts and development challenges: economic, environmental, and technological. Today, when global norms and institutions are also being challenged, the role of UNU-WIDER has never been more vital.

As we look to the future, UNU-WIDER is uniquely positioned to address emerging global challenges. What sets UNU-WIDER apart from many other research institutions based in the Global North is its commitment to generating research in partnership with researchers and institutions in the Global South. It also focuses on building their capacities and promoting evidence-based policy dialogues with their governments. For example, engaging with policymakers in Mozambique and South Africa on inclusive growth and development issues not only enriches policy debates in these countries but also enhances regional and global understanding of development dynamics. Furthermore, UNU-WIDER stands out because it bases its evidence on both national data and grounded research and case studies.

As we celebrate its 40th anniversary, I feel confident that UNU-WIDER is well-positioned to address today's complex challenges with its innovative research, impactful capacity-building activities, and influential policy engagements, all in partnership with partners in the Global South.



Marty Chen
Chair, WIDER Board

Lecturer in Urban Policy and Design,
Harvard Graduate School of Design
Senior Advisor at Women in Informal Employment: Globalizing and Organizing (WIEGO)

WIDER Board 2024



From left:
Fiona Tregenna, Antero Klemola,
Shantayanan Devarajan, Martha Chen,
Kunal Sen, Raquel Fernández, Jo Beall,
and Justin Lin

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Our work

Based in Helsinki, Finland, UNU-WIDER operates globally within the United Nations system through partnerships and an extensive network of experts. As a distinctive blend of think tank, research institute, and UN agency, our Institute is uniquely positioned to generate impactful knowledge that informs policymaking and implementation across local, regional, and global levels.

Our 2024–27 work programme addresses three challenges critical to sustainable development: (i) reducing persistent inequalities in material and non-material dimensions, (ii) building sustainable peace in conflict-affected societies, and (iii) creating the fiscal space for development. Our approach is to tackle pertinent research questions within these areas, using them as strategic guides to integrate economic, political, and social dimensions in development debates.

A unique blend of five key dimensions

The strength of UNU-WIDER lies in its integration of five key dimensions, which together define our identity and enhance our impact on the global stage.



1

THINK TANK

As a think tank, UNU-WIDER draws on robust evidence from our research to engage actively in policy debates, serving as a trusted thought-partner at both national and global levels



2

RESEARCH INSTITUTE

We conduct original and independent research that adheres to the highest academic standards, bolstering our credibility as a key resource for tackling fundamental development challenges



3

UN AGENCY

Our status as part of the UN system grants us direct access to global policy processes, enabling us to serve as a neutral and trusted partner for UN member states



4

IN-COUNTRY PRESENCE IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

We maintain strong, long-term partnerships with national academic institutions and government entities at the country level, enhancing our capacity to bridge research, policy formulation, and capacity development



5

GLOBAL NETWORK OF RESEARCHERS AND POLICYMAKERS

Our extensive network spans researchers and policymakers from all regions of the world, fostering a rich diversity of perspectives on pressing development issues. This network facilitates collaborations that bring together varied backgrounds and viewpoints, enriching the global development discourse

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.

Vision

Our vision at UNU-WIDER is to illuminate complex issues, empowering countries in the Global South and their development partners to craft impactful policies that unleash their developmental potential. We aim to:

- Elevate the voices, agency, and capabilities of people from the Global South by collaborating closely with in-country research and policy circles
- Pursue innovative and rigorous public-good research that meets the highest academic standards
- Catalyze and facilitate the use of research evidence for positive change, ensuring that policy decisions are informed by solid empirical data
- Foster open and transparent knowledge-based debate across the research and policy communities, encouraging a multifaceted dialogue that bridges gaps between theory and practice

UNU-WIDER renews focus on inequality, conflict, and creating the fiscal space for development





UN Photo/Mark Garten

With less than five years remaining to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), UNU-WIDER continues to increase available knowledge on how to combine national policy initiatives, global cooperation, and research results to achieve progress. In 2024, UNU-WIDER began a new work programme to address critical challenges in global development with focused research on inequalities, conflicts, and fiscal space for development. How does research on these three topics change the world?

As a donor-funded research institute within the United Nations system, UNU-WIDER is well-positioned to influence global conversations in multilateral forums and support policy reform and formulation at national levels. Its work supports UN Member States with development goals through two primary avenues: provision of state-of-the-art research evidence, particularly on the policy experiences of Global South countries, and advocating for member states' concerns in the international arena, for example, in multilateral cooperation, development financing, or peacekeeping efforts.

Research evidence

The first area—research evidence—includes development of high-quality data, which means putting the knowledge infrastructure in place to enable ongoing research and policy analysis even after a programmatic period closes or a funding cycle ends. This infrastructure is important because almost no policy is perfect out-of-the-box. Usually, considerable fine-tuning by policymakers is needed to get implementation right. So, capacity must be developed inside national government offices and local academic institutions to enable ongoing production of research evidence that can support this process of fine-tuning.



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One of UNU-WIDER’s main advantages—the result of 40 years of conducting research worldwide—is its ability to connect domestic public servants with international experts. This connection facilitates the easy sharing of best practices and experience across countries, something that is particularly prevalent in UNU-WIDER’s country programmes like Mozambique and South Africa. South–South cooperation is therefore enhanced in both the comparative evidence and the process of creating it.

For example, across sub-Saharan Africa, UNU-WIDER continues to support the capacity to use administrative tax data for economic analysis and to provide national tax-benefit microsimulation models. These tools offer quick feasibility tests for everything from small-scale social transfers and tax expenditures to universal pension schemes. Policymakers can look to our research evidence to see what has been done in another country, how well it worked, and if similar work might not provide insights for policy formulation at home.

What’s on the global agenda in 2025?

In 2025, the United Nations will host the [4th International Conference on Financing for Development](#), expecting the summit to result in decisive agreements to mitigate today’s global debt crisis. In 2024, global public debt reached record highs, [approaching 100% of global](#)

[economic output](#) and the [number of countries at risk of debt distress rose to above 60](#). With debt-servicing costs hamstringing more than half of low-income countries, creating the fiscal space for development is a critical priority.

Similarly, discussions about the needs of Global South countries will be more present at the G20 Summit negotiations, with the 2024 Summit hosted by Brazil and 2025 by South Africa. And, with China’s emergence as an important bilateral creditor for lower-income countries over the past decade, multilateral discussions in the BRICS group will matter, too. As the US now turns away from multilateralism and reduces its foreign aid priorities, there are important opportunities for European countries to increase their leadership on international solutions.

The OECD will continue to be an important forum. Not only does it host the Development Assistance Committee of the world’s top official development assistance (ODA) donors, it is also a place where the US, China, European states, and Global South countries are represented and work together. The OECD will also continue to work on international tax fairness, an important part of the solution to fiscal constraints in low-income countries. The IMF and World Bank—important creditors which shape the course of national recoveries for member states hoping to emerge from debt-distress—are also implementing reforms.

COP30 will set new national emission reduction targets as a part of the Paris Agreement and hammer out details on the 2024 agreement to triple ODA financing for climate projects (from USD 100 to 300 billion by 2030). And, as the market pressure to cut social spending mounts over the year, Qatar will host the United Nations **Second World Summit for Social Development**, expected to set the agenda for the next global development goals after 2030.

UNU-WIDER will be there

Our research evidence, including in-depth explorations of policy experiences in Global South countries, speaks to government efforts to reduce inequality, overcome violent conflicts, provide effective social protection, support the structural transformation and diversification of the economy, advance climate-friendly economic and energy production, ensure food security, strengthen public budgets, shore up macroeconomic resilience to shocks, and other topics of critical importance to successful and sustainable national development.

Our work programme, naturally, includes discussing our research findings where they can be most impactful. UNU-WIDER's work supports the conversations taking place in the multilateral forums highlighted above, offering rigorous evidence to support many of the arguments Global South countries are expected to make. In 2025, UNU-WIDER will have a presence in the global



conversation, convening international experts and national policymakers for pivotal discussions alongside the critical events shaping international cooperation, including the G20 Summit in South Africa, the OECD in Paris, COP30 in Belem, and major United Nations conferences in Seville and Doha.

About the work programme

UNU-WIDER's new work programme focuses on three research areas—reducing inequalities, resolving conflicts, and creating the fiscal space for development—and cutting across three themes of gender, data for development, and climate change. Our projects address a range of critical issues, including domestic revenue mobilization, social protection systems, reform of the international financial architecture, safety nets in post-conflict and humanitarian contexts, and green industrial policy for the transition to a net-zero, climate-friendly future.

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Enhancing economic policymaking in Africa through trusted partnerships

In today's rapidly changing economic landscape, the importance of evidence-based policymaking cannot be overstated. Across Africa, countries face challenges related to limited access to reliable data and insufficient analytical capacities, hindering efforts to drive economic growth and tackle issues such as poverty, inequality, and fiscal instability. Addressing these barriers is essential to strengthening governance, enhancing fiscal resilience, and fostering inclusive economic development.

UNU-WIDER collaborates with governments and institutions to address these challenges through partnerships that support the effective use of administrative data, capacity development, and



▲ Stakeholders from the South African Revenue Service, National Treasury, the European Union, the UK Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, and other partners engage in a discussion on the milestones and impact of the SA-TIED programme.



▲ Panelists at an SA-TIED policy dialogue discuss economic research and policy solutions, reflecting collaboration between government, researchers, and international partners.



▲ Researchers at an SA-TIED Work-in-Progress workshop exchange ideas on ongoing studies.

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cross-border knowledge-sharing. These efforts support policymakers to develop solutions that are evidence-based, contextually relevant, and aligned with national priorities.

Through the Southern Africa – Towards Inclusive Economic Development (SA-TIED) programme, access to anonymized administrative data has been enhanced via the National Treasury Secure Data Facility (NT-SDF), supporting research to inform key policy reforms. In Uganda, the Uganda Revenue Authority research lab demonstrates

how administrative tax data can strengthen fiscal systems and decision-making. In Mozambique, partnerships under the Inclusive growth in Mozambique (IGM) programme focus on addressing systemic challenges such as poverty and inequality through evidence-based approaches tailored to local contexts.

These collaborations exemplify how partnerships built on trust, shared goals, and aligned priorities can empower policymakers to navigate complex economic landscapes.

Leveraging data to reform policies in South Africa

Through the NT-SDF, the SA-TIED programme has enhanced access to anonymized administrative tax data, enabling researchers to generate insights that inform evidence-based policymaking. Measures include detailed metadata documentation to guide users, streamlined booking systems for researchers, and the provision of dummy datasets that facilitate understanding of the data’s structure and labeling. This secure repository provides a platform for rigorous analysis, which serves as the foundation for actionable knowledge to address complex economic challenges.

Research conducted through the NT-SDF has been instrumental in shaping several policy reforms. For example, [studies analyzing disparities in tax burdens across sectors, debt-equity biases, and tax enforcement](#) informed ongoing policy debates, shaping considerations around corporate tax restructuring, including discussions that preceded the 2020 Budget. Similarly, [research on the Employment Tax Incentive examined](#) its role in supporting youth employment. While the findings suggest a limited impact on overall employment rates, evidence points to some gains in earnings for certain eligible workers. These insights contributed to discussions around the incentive's expansion during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Insights from the NT-SDF have also guided strategies to address broader fiscal challenges. [Studies on fiscal multipliers](#) emphasized the importance of growth-oriented investments, while research into behavioural patterns at tax thresholds provided evidence for designing fairer policies that reduce avoidance and broaden the tax base. These findings have strengthened South Africa's ability to deliver public services and invest in critical infrastructure.

The principles underpinning SA-TIED and the NT-SDF extend beyond national boundaries. By prioritizing transparency in data processes, secure and controlled access to anonymized data, and evidence-based policymaking, the SA-TIED programme demonstrates how these elements can drive actionable research and policy reforms.



Partnering with SA-TIED enhances the National Treasury's economic policymaking by integrating high-quality research and data-driven insights. This collaboration is essential for effectively addressing South Africa's complex challenges, including fiscal management, inequality, and sustainable development. The research developed through the SA-TIED ensures that our policies are both informed and strategically aligned with our objectives for economic stability and inclusivity.

Dr Duncan Pieterse
Director-General, National Treasury



I view IGM as a strategic programme because it serves two key functions. Firstly, it has a crucial analytical component that helps us pinpoint vital sectors needing thorough analysis and supplies us with high-quality research to formulate evidence-based policies promoting inclusive growth. Secondly, the IGM programme significantly boosts our capacity development, providing the country with more qualified staff in the areas we focus on at the ministry. This contribution is of great value to the country.

Enilde Sarmiento
Director, National Directorate of Economic Policies and Development, Ministry of Economy and Finance of Mozambique (2020-24)



✓ Agriculture sector stakeholders in Mozambique discussing possible research topics using a database on real-time food price data collected under the IGM programme.



▲ Participants of the workshop on agricultural product price data organized in Maputo, Mozambique, under the IGM programme.

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This approach serves as a practical framework for addressing fiscal challenges, reducing inequality, and promoting economic growth—key aspects of sustainable development. In 2024, SA-TIED was featured at the United Nations General Assembly’s Summit of the Future, showcasing its contribution to advancing data-driven solutions.

These achievements are the result of the collective efforts from SA-TIED’s diverse partners, including the National Treasury, SARS, the European Union, and the United Kingdom Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. UNU-WIDER has served as a convener, facilitating collaboration and ensuring that each partner’s contributions are integral to programme success.

Expanding impact in East Africa

Building on South Africa’s initiatives, we have partnered with other government entities in sub-Saharan Africa. In Uganda, we established a research lab with the Uganda Revenue Authority that leverages administrative tax data to address economic challenges and inform evidence-based policymaking.

Tailored to Uganda’s unique context, the lab fosters deeper insights into revenue dynamics and supporting the design of effective fiscal policies. Our role in this partnership involves facilitating knowledge exchange and supporting the application of advanced analytical techniques, ensuring

the lab is well-positioned to meet its objectives. This initiative underscores the importance of aligning methodologies with local priorities to sustainably strengthen fiscal systems. Beyond its immediate contributions, the lab has sparked broader discussions across East Africa about using administrative data to advance development, such as in Rwanda.

Supporting inclusive growth in Mozambique

In Mozambique, our focus is on fostering inclusive growth through evidence-based policies by collecting and analysing primary and secondary data on key developmental issues, creating local analytical and research capacities, and supporting partnerships between policymakers and academia. Through the IGM programme, we collaborate with the Ministry of Economy and Finance, the University of Eduardo Mondlane, and the University of Copenhagen to address issues such as poverty, inequality, macroeconomic stability, labour market and private sector dynamics, agricultural productivity and vulnerability to climate and economic shocks. A new area of collaboration is measuring the effectiveness of social protection programmes. A key element of our work in Mozambique is responding to local demand for knowledge and developing related capabilities in local institutions. This partnership has provided critical evidence that guides annual government plans and budgets, informs policies aimed at reducing poverty, improving smallholder

farmer productivity, and fostering private sector development. Since 2016, the IGM programme has been pivotal in bridging data gaps and producing high-quality evidence for policymaking, contributing to the emergence of a new generation of local economists and analysts with strong quantitative skills.

Building capacity for evidence-based policymaking

Across sub-Saharan Africa, our long-term partnerships are also dedicated to strengthening institutional capacity and advancing evidence-based policymaking. Through capacity development initiatives, we collaborate with policymakers and researchers to enhance their ability to analyze and apply administrative data effectively. These initiatives address critical areas such as tax policy analysis, microsimulation modelling, and data management, providing essential tools to navigate complex fiscal and economic challenges.

The success of these efforts lies in the shared contributions of diverse stakeholders. Governments, academic institutions, and international organizations bring vital resources and expertise, ensuring that programmes are tailored to the unique priorities of local and regional contexts. By combining these strengths, we are building a foundation for more resilient and inclusive governance. Evidence-based

policymaking is not only addressing immediate challenges but also supporting sustainable development across sub-Saharan Africa.

A shared vision for Africa's future

Partnerships across sub-Saharan Africa continue to be crucial in advancing evidence-based policymaking. Initiatives like SA-TIED, the Uganda Revenue Authority and Zambia Revenue Authority research labs, and the IGM programme show how collaboration between governments, institutions, and stakeholders enhances the capacity to tackle complex developmental challenges through effective use of administrative data.

UNU-WIDER supports these efforts by facilitating access to data, enhancing analytical capacity, and fostering connections among partners. This shared approach ensures that initiatives remain locally owned and responsive to national and regional priorities while benefiting from global expertise and perspectives.

As these partnerships evolve, they provide a foundation for more resilient governance systems and inclusive policy solutions. By working together, governments, institutions, and international stakeholders are building sustainable pathways to address shared development goals, contributing to a future defined by stronger institutions and equitable growth.

✓ Participants from the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Mozambique and University of Eduardo Mondlane in a training on data on Mozambican manufacturing enterprises.



▲ The data workshops organized under the IGM programme aim at disseminating high-quality data and promoting their use in academic and policy-relevant research among government technicians and local academics.



A stakeholder at UNU-WIDER premises with the Director and staff of the institute in early 1990s.

Developing a WIDER perspective on economics

1985–1995

In an increasingly interconnected world, economic instability, conflict, and inequality pose significant challenges. Concerns about such instability and limited solutions from academia in the early 1980s spurred the establishment of UNU-WIDER.

This piece explores the foundational years of UNU-WIDER, a think tank that emerged during that economically and politically tumultuous period in the 1980s. Established with the vision to address pressing economic challenges, UNU-WIDER would evolve into a hub for transformative research and discussion during its first decade.

At that time, development success was almost universally considered to be measured by GDP growth rate. From day one, the point was to establish a research institute that could bring a wider set of perspectives beyond the narrow confines of mainstream economics. Connecting and amplifying voices from the Global South and fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, the institute has become a vital player in shaping policy dialogues that recognize the importance of inclusivity and high-quality knowledge with a commitment to rigorous, evidence-based research.



▲ UNU-WIDER Board 1988.

The challenge of the work becoming too academic was to be addressed by including a board with members from outside academia, as well as government and development practitioners in the research programme. This approach would ensure that the research remained focused on realistic and actionable solutions.

<< This approach has endured through the last four decades. It enhances the credibility of the institute's policy recommendations but also plays a crucial role in restoring public trust in expertise during times of disinformation. As we drill into the early years of UNU-WIDER, we reflect on how its legacy informs our current approach to sustainable economic development, emphasizing the enduring power of knowledge in forging pathways toward a more equitable and stable international economy.

Why UNU-WIDER was needed

In the 1970s and '80s, debt and unemployment, inflation and stagnation, famine and food insecurity, the disparities in living standards and economic

prospects between the Global South and North were becoming a burning concern. Some involved in international politics and economics were especially worried about the inability of existing economic theories to explain the disorder in the world and to recommend improvements. Gradually, efforts converged among economists and policymakers, particularly from the Group of Seventy-Seven, representing some of the poorer UN member states. They sought to develop research capacity sensitive to the needs of what was then called the 'Third World' (rich countries being 'First World' and communist countries 'Second World' in the parlance of the era). Simultaneously, they aimed to avoid confrontational approaches in dealing with global players, with whom they would need to

resolve problems. One place that could respond and navigate the complex context—the UN and academia, both internationally and nationally—was a relatively new think tank called the United Nations University (UNU), established in 1972.

However, the decision to start a new research institute, initially dubbed the Global Economic Policy Research Institute (GEPRI), was not taken lightly. In March 1982, 24 economists from academia and public institutions gathered at the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) with the leadership of UNU to discuss the feasibility of the new institution, including the possible topics it would study, its name, how to fund it, and its location.

The group deliberated for three days. Cautiously positive, they envisaged a bold institute that would not shy away from big or controversial issues. Maintaining the highest academic and scientific quality was agreed to be of paramount importance—the institute should undertake serious, objective, but always real-world relevant policy-oriented work. These issues should be tackled using a broad range of academic approaches from economics, sociology, history, philosophy, and geography, and by a truly global group of people representing diverse thinking and knowledge. The challenge of the work becoming too academic was to be addressed by including a board with members from outside academia, as well as government and development practitioners in the research programme. This approach would ensure that the research remained focused on realistic and actionable solutions.

An essential factor was UNU’s UN status, which, coupled with guaranteed academic freedom, would allow the new institute to remain a neutral and open platform for intellectual debate. The group also discussed the training aspect of their plans, emphasizing UNU’s commitment to education. It was argued that separating education from research could dilute the focus of a small institute. The recommendation was to integrate research with capacity development activities involving stakeholders, rather than treating it as a separate endeavour.

The name and location

Once a general structure and principles were sketched, the next questions were the institute's name and location. While there were many suggestions during the run-up to officially starting the institute, the final name was coined by Amartya Sen, who had not only joined the workshop in LSE, but was also enthusiastically advising the UNU Rector in the preparations and thinking about this new institute. One day on a train in the Netherlands, he jotted down the word W-I-D-E-R in capital letters.

He later recalled that he was concerned the abbreviation would feel a bit facile, but it was important for him that it signified what the institute was about—namely that it was welcome to inputs from all social sciences, that ethics and economics cannot be artificially separated, and indeed that development was something wider than just GDP growth.



▲ Former Director Lal Jawardena accepting the Indian contribution to the UNU-WIDER endowment fund.



▲ UNU-WIDER Board meeting in 1988.

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Participants of the UNU/WIDER Conference on Debt, Stabilization and Development
in Memory of Carlos Díaz-Alejandro
Helsinki, August 1986

Choosing the location involved competition and negotiation among several European countries interested in hosting UNU-WIDER. In the end, Finland secured the institute's physical and financial future. In 1983, the UNU Council officially established UNU-WIDER, and in 1984, the Republic of Finland and UNU signed an agreement to establish a research institute on international development and economics in Helsinki.

Expectations for the institute were high, and it was even mentioned in the influential second Brandt Commission report. However, the challenge was substantial: how could the institute make a significant impact in its first decade with a limited budget and the daunting task of attracting staff to a location near the North Pole, all while lacking established relationships or a reputation?

The foundations of a sustainable institute

As preparations for the 1985 opening heated up, Lal Jawardena, a Sri Lankan economist and diplomat, was appointed as the first Director of UNU-WIDER. Under his guidance, and with support from the office of the Rector of UNU and the new WIDER Board, the institute aimed to fulfill the ambitious hopes and plans that had been established for its future.

The major strategic challenge for a new institute with a modest budget and high expectations was to quickly make an impact and carve out a niche in the international development policy arena. The aim was to become impactful and sustainable in a short period. At the recommendation of the Director, the advisory

board decided to engage leading intellectuals, policymakers, and scholars to lead research projects that would address the pressing questions of the 1980s. As a result, the seemingly remote location of Helsinki became a hub for development economics.

Visitors included a diverse range of thinkers—from Marxist economists like Stephen Marglin and John Roemer to historians such as E.P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm, as well as Nobel Laureates in the neoclassical tradition like Thomas Schelling and Robert Solow. The model of ‘letting a hundred flowers bloom’ became part of the DNA of UNU-WIDER and continues to define its approach today.

High-quality research, ongoing impact on current debates

From the outset, UNU-WIDER was designed to produce practical, policy-oriented work aimed at improving development policies both internationally and locally, not merely studying them. The institute’s first research programme perfectly exemplifies the diverse types of research still conducted at UNU-WIDER today, showcasing various paths from research to action. The programme included themes like *Hunger and poverty – the poorest billion* led by Amartya Sen, *Money, finance, and trade – reform of world development* under the leadership of Saburo Okita (Chair, WIDER Board), Lance Taylor, Gerry Hellainer, and Stephen Marglin, and *Development and technological change – the management of change*, guided by Surendra Patel.

Hunger, famines and the capability approach

Amartya Sen first introduced the concept of capability in his 1979 Tanner Lecture titled ‘Equality of What?’ and went on to elaborate it in subsequent work during the 1980s and 1990s. A lot of that work was done and published in the *Hunger and poverty* research theme he was leading at UNU-WIDER.

Jean Drèze, Sen’s longtime collaborator, first wrote to Amartya Sen in the early 1980s suggesting they address famine prevention. Sen invited Drèze, to Helsinki, where he spent time at the institute, proposing they co-author a book on the subject. Sen went on to also organize a conference on the research theme in 1986 in Helsinki, which was attended by many who went on to change development economics in institutions around the world. Sen’s opening remarks to the conference became the first book to be published by UNU-WIDER, *Hunger and Public Action* (available open access) by Jean Drèze and Amartya Sen. This was the beginning of a series of collaborations and projects that pushed forward the capabilities approach that Sen and others had been developing before his time at UNU-WIDER. The conducive academic environment in Helsinki, coupled with fresh perspectives and start-up energy, made it possible to challenge existing development concepts effectively.

Martha Nussbaum, a philosopher and professor of law at Brown University at the time, joined the project. The paper ‘Internal Criticism and Indian Rationalist Traditions’ by Nussbaum and Sen initiated several years of collaboration at the

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The formative years of UNU-WIDER were defined by a bold vision and an unwavering commitment to reshaping the conversation around economic development.



▲ Amartya Sen and Jean Drèze at the UNU-WIDER Symposium on Hunger and Public Action. Presentation of the book *Hunger and public action* in Helsinki, July 1990.



▲ UNU-WIDER non-academic staff, 1986.

(Back row from the left) Ara Kazandjian, Liisa Roponen, Susanna Oinas, Barbara Fagerman, Erkki Viitanen, Sherry Ruuskanen, Harri Ketonen, Tuula Haarla, and Anne Ruohonen.

(Front row from the left) Lea Hallbäck, Maria Kauppinen, Janis Vehmaan-Kreula, and Lorraine Telfer-Taivainen.

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institute. In 1993, they published an edited volume, *The Quality of Life*, as part of the newly launched WIDER Studies in Development Economics series by Oxford University Press. This foundational work in the capabilities and human development approaches offers a deep philosophical exploration of the topics. From these beginnings, Nussbaum developed the most systematic and influential capability theory of justice to date.

This work not only influenced the academic sphere but, in true UNU-WIDER fashion, aimed to and succeeded in changing the discourse around development. Amartya Sen's lifelong friend, Mahbub Ul Haq, a member of the WIDER Board and a scholar and policymaker, was instrumental in this change. In 1989, he persuaded Sen to join him in Finland to develop concrete measures and a framework for the first-ever Human Development Report of the UNDP, which he oversaw. Launched in 1990, the report has been published almost annually since then, significantly altering the discourse on development success beyond mere GDP metrics.

Stabilization and adjustment policies and programmes

Gerry Hellainer, who had chaired the Commonwealth's group on the Bretton Woods system (a group Lal Jayawardena also served in), was a key figure from the start. Jayawardena hoped to engage Hellainer and his network in UNU-WIDER's theme on stabilization and adjustment policies and programmes. Lance Taylor eventually led this critical project.

Critical of the orthodox 'neoclassical' or 'monetarist' approaches of the IMF and the World Bank, the research found that structural adjustment and stabilization programmes were neither stable nor geared towards growth, with methodologies particularly deficient in addressing macroeconomic shocks. The need for better stabilization strategies geared towards growth was evident.

The key concern was that structural adjustment programmes and austerity under IMF programmes were throttling development-orientated investment. UNU-WIDER hosted a workshop in 1986 to discuss these issues before publishing the final papers and a summary book. Two analysts from the IMF were also invited to debate. The final session of the workshop became a heated debate. The topic centered on Argentina's experience. Argentine researchers shared with IMF analysts the realities during and after the implementation of the structural adjustment plan in their country, as well as the current economic situation. After this meeting, UNU-WIDER was known as 'WILDER' in some circles in Washington.

Eighteen country studies, 13 led by local scholars, provided a unique analysis of the effects of these stabilization programmes, revealing how the 'same medicine' could lead to vastly different outcomes in different contexts. Lance Taylor compiled these findings into a short book that included a list of essential questions IMF negotiators should ask when discussing with governments, a resource that became widely used by IMF country teams across the Global South. The book and the papers were an important part of a global conversation, bringing

voices and analysis from the countries that struggled with macroeconomic woes and the IMF cure.

Contributors to this early work included people who have left their mark in development and economics in their own countries and internationally like Andres Solimano, Nora Lustig, Rolph van der Hoeven, Benno Ndulu, Alice Amsden, Roberto Frenkel, Jose Antonio Ocampo, and Ronald Findlay. All have regularly participated in UNU-WIDER's work over the last 40 years in different roles.

This project helped establish the now-mainstream view that policy solutions for developing economies cannot be one-size-fits-all and that development research and policy practice must be diagnostic, evidence-based, and experience-informed.

The legacy of the early years

The formative years of UNU-WIDER were defined by a bold vision and an unwavering commitment to reshaping the conversation around economic development. In a period rife with contradictions—ranging from escalating global debt crises to growing disparities between rich and poor—the necessity for innovative perspectives was paramount. UNU-WIDER emerged as a beacon of thought leadership, uniting scholars and policymakers from diverse disciplines and regions to confront the pressing challenges of our time.

A crucial aspect of UNU-WIDER's legacy is its dedication to inclusivity in research, particularly regarding the Global South. By amplifying the voices and needs of developing nations, the institute

positioned itself as a significant contributor to the discourse leading up to the UN's Millennium Development Goals and its successor, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This alignment with the SDGs emphasizes the importance of equitable economic growth, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion—goals that continue to be paramount in our collective pursuit of a better world.

Additionally, the early years of UNU-WIDER were critical in fostering an environment that championed the power of knowledge amidst a global backdrop increasingly threatened by a 'war on science'. In an era where misinformation can undermine informed policy, UNU-WIDER's commitment to rigorous, evidence-based research plays a vital role in restoring trust in expertise. This dedication is not just an academic exercise; it is a clarion call to prioritize robust research as a fundamental pillar of democratic governance and effective policymaking.

Ultimately, the legacy of UNU-WIDER's early years serves as a beacon of resilience and progress. The institute emerged as a catalyst for transformative conversations about the fundamental inequities embedded within our global economic systems. As we move forward, drawing lessons from this legacy is essential as we strive to end poverty for all while navigating the complexities of our ever-evolving world and the stresses that prosperity imposes upon nature, not least the climate. The early principles of collaboration, inclusivity, and the powerful application of knowledge remain as relevant today as they were four decades ago, guiding us in our collective mission to achieve a sustainable and equitable future.

In an era where misinformation can undermine informed policy, UNU-WIDER's commitment to rigorous, evidence-based research plays a vital role in restoring trust in expertise.



▲ UNU-WIDER resident research staff, September 1996.

(Back row from the left) Juha Houkkila, Renato Paniccia, Giovanni Andrea Cornia, Wayne Nafziger, Daniel Edevbaro, Michael Graham, Derseh Engale, Vladimir Popov, Helinä Melkäs, Pekka Seppälä, Nguyuru H. I. Lipumba.

(Front row from left) Lu Aihno, Marja Liisa Swantz, Germano Mwabu, Manuel Montes, Cecilia Ugaz.



UNU-WIDER in the field

- photos from primary data collection in Mozambique

Solid data is a cornerstone for good research. UNU-WIDER supports countries with limited access to data by strengthening their capacities in collecting, harmonizing, and analysing primary and secondary data.

Our work through the Inclusive growth in Mozambique (IGM) programme supports the Government of Mozambique and local academia in gaining access to new data sources and using data for policy-relevant analysis and research. The topics covered range from macroeconomics and labour market dynamics to small-scale agriculture and social protection.

This photo story depicts our work in collecting price data in some of the key food markets in Maputo and surveying vulnerable communities on the effectiveness of social protection programmes in the Northern and Central provinces of Mozambique. The results of these surveys have direct bearing on designing related policies.

Understanding the dynamics of food pricing in Maputo markets

The Prices Project collects and compares prices of basic food items like maize, lettuce, and tomatoes to enhance our understanding of food price formation in Mozambique.



In Mozambique, analysing how and why food prices change is crucial. Understanding the dynamics of price formation is fundamental to mitigate the adverse effects of price volatility to the economy.

Ângelo Nhalidede

Deputy Director, National Directorate of Economic Policies and Development, Ministry of Economy and Finance of Mozambique

Detailed data on the prices of key food items in Mozambique is limited in both coverage and reliability. The Prices Project aims to close this data gap in the main markets of Maputo Province.



Firmino Guiliche

Prices Project Coordinator

It was interesting being able to go to different markets and understand how prices work. By accessing various markets, we were able to see just how many options are available in terms of price and quality.

Micas Sarmiento

Enumerator

Supporting the design of social protection programmes in Mozambique

The Vulnerable Lives Survey (VLS) examines the effectiveness of Mozambique's social protection systems in highly vulnerable and shock-prone contexts. It assesses various aspects of social assistance and their role in supporting the economic and social resilience of households. The survey is conducted in the provinces of Nampula, Sofala, Zambézia, and Maputo.

Social protection programmes that effectively meet local needs can significantly improve the well-being of the poor and vulnerable and break the cycle of structural poverty. Measuring their effectiveness and understanding their impact is crucial for policymakers.

Enilde Sarmento

Director, National Directorate of Economic Policies and Development, Ministry of Economy and Finance of Mozambique (2020–24)



Data collection among vulnerable communities requires careful ethical consideration. Among key issues are the privacy and confidentiality of participants. Ensuring transparency and obtaining informed consent, particularly from elderly rural residents, demands experienced interviewers proficient in local languages.

Amadeu Luís das Neves Cossa
VLS Field Work Supervisor

We believe that the ongoing data collection and analysis will provide further evidence to enhance the effectiveness of the PSSB-elderly programme, making it a vital tool in the effort to alleviate poverty in Mozambique.

Sara Almeida
VLS Data Quality Monitor

2024 highlights

JAN

PARTNERSHIP:

Findings from recent research based on Ugandan administrative tax data gather visibility in the local media
 UNU-WIDER and the Uganda Revenue Authority presented tax data research findings at a Kampala workshop, gaining significant local media visibility. The collaboration showcased impactful policy recommendations derived from administrative tax data analysis.



FEB

JOURNAL SPECIAL ISSUE:

Women's Work: Routes to social and economic empowerment
World Development published a special issue on gender empowerment, synthesizing UNU-WIDER research on economic and social pathways for women's work globally.



MARCH

CONFERENCE: Innovation for structural transformation in Least Developed Countries – LDC5 Future Forum

This forum emphasized the urgency of science, technology, and innovation in accelerating SDG progress for least-developed countries.



COLLABORATION: Connecting the productivity challenge with development policies in Latin America and the Caribbean

In partnership with ECLAC, UNU-WIDER explored productive development policies to address persistent productivity challenges in Latin America and the Caribbean. This collaboration provided valuable insights into regional development strategies, enhancing local and global understanding of productivity dynamics.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT: UNU-WIDER facilitates learning at 2024 ATI Tax Gap Workshop

UNU-WIDER co-facilitated the 2024 ATI Tax Gap Workshop in Tanzania, training participants on estimating tax gaps, critical for mobilizing domestic revenues in the Global South.

COLLABORATION: EU commits EUR 2 million to SA-TIED programme as policy dialogue on climate-resilient infrastructure takes center stage

On 19 March 2024, the European Union committed EUR 2 million to the Southern Africa Towards Inclusive Economic Development (SA-TIED) programme, enhancing climate-resilient infrastructure in South Africa. This support, highlighted during a policy dialogue with stakeholders, bolsters UNU-WIDER's efforts in promoting sustainable and evidence-based economic policies.



BOOK: Mozambique at a Fork in the Road – The Institutional Diagnostic Project

The launch of *Mozambique at a Fork in the Road* offered institutional insights into the country's development challenges and opportunities.

BOOK: Sustaining Tanzania's Economic Development A firm and household perspective

This book examined resilience strategies of Tanzanian firms and households in navigating shocks and promoting sustainable growth.

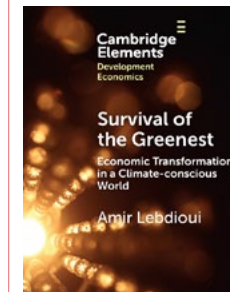
APRIL

EXPERT COMMENTARY: WIDERAngle blog series on Securing the futures of next generations

The *WIDERAngle* blog series captured global experts' perspectives on securing future generations, extending discussions from the WIDER Development Conference held in Maputo, Mozambique. Contributions included Luis Felipe López-Calva and Haroon Borhat, enriching the debate on long-term global challenges.

BOOK: Survival of the Greenest w Economic Transformation in a Climate-Conscious World

Survival of the Greenest analyzed climate-driven economic transformation, highlighting green industrial policies and equitable pathways to low-carbon development.



MAY

CONFERENCE: WIDER Development Conference: The world at crossroads – securing the future generations

The WIDER Development Conference in Maputo convened global researchers to deliberate on climate change, inequality, and political instability. This gathering charted actionable strategies for future generations, highlighting UNU-WIDER's role in addressing contemporary global issues.



BOOK: COVID-19 and the Informal Economy Impact, Recovery and the Future

This book analyzed the COVID-19 pandemic's disproportionate impact on informal workers worldwide and explored pathways to inclusive economic recovery.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT: UNU-WIDER launches a free online training course in tax-benefit microsimulation for Global South countries

UNU-WIDER launched a free online training course in tax-benefit microsimulation tailored for Global South economies. This initiative democratized advanced policy analysis tools, enhancing the analytical capabilities of policymakers and researchers in Global South countries.

2024 highlights

JUNE

JOURNAL SPECIAL ISSUE:

Clientelist Politics and Development

A *World Development* special issue examined the detrimental impacts of clientelist politics on governance and state capacity in the Global South.

DATA COLLECTION:

Fieldwork began for VLS in Mozambique to assess social protection systems in vulnerable and shock-prone regions.



AUGUST

PRESENTATION: UNU-WIDER at IIPF Conference 2024

UNU-WIDER-supported research was prominently featured at the 80th Annual Congress of the International Institute of Public Finance in Prague, showcasing an exceptional volume of tax research leveraging African tax data—an impactful milestone at one of the leading global public finance conferences.

PRESENTATION:

Smart taxation: Raising revenue and reducing inequality in South Africa

An SA-TIED dialogue explored the impacts of PIT reforms on taxpayer behavior, revenue collection, and inequality, offering insights to enhance South Africa’s tax system.

PUBLICATION:

OECD releases 2024 Development Co-operation Report with two chapters from UNU-WIDER

The OECD’s 2024 Development Co-operation Report featured two chapters from UNU-WIDER, focusing on green transitions and addressing poverty and inequalities. This contribution showcased UNU-WIDER’s expertise in influencing global economic policies and development strategies.



SEPT

WIDER ANNUAL LECTURE 28:

The billionaire tax – a (modest) proposal for the 21st century

Gabriel Zucman’s WIDER Annual Lecture 28 on the billionaire tax proposed equitable taxation systems to address disparities driven by ultra-wealthy advantages. This lecture highlighted UNU-WIDER’s commitment to fostering fair and effective tax policies globally.

COLLABORATION:

UNU-WIDER contributes to global efforts towards reforming the international financial architecture

UNU-WIDER advanced reform discussions on the international financial architecture, spotlighting equitable financing for Global South nations.

WORKSHOP: New insights on inequality and economic transformation Revisiting the Kuznets Curve at 70

A UNU-WIDER workshop revisited the Kuznets Curve’s relevance to inequality and structural transformation, featuring insights from leading scholars like Ravi Kanbur and Nancy Birdsall.

CONFERENCE: Mozambican trainees presenting at UEM conference

Since 2017, the IGM programme has been running a transformative traineeship initiative, equipping young economists with academic research skills and fostering their career development. In 2024, the latest cohort showcased their growth by presenting academic posters at a conference organized by the Faculty of Economics at the University of Eduardo Mondlane.



OCT

CONFERENCE:

Jobs and Development Conference

The *Jobs and Development Conference* explored global employment challenges, co-hosted with UNU-WIDER, World Bank, ILO, and international research partners.



NOV

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT: MOZMOD training and retreat 2024

The MOZMOD Training and Retreat 2024 enhanced the capabilities of Mozambican policymakers, academics, and stakeholders in tax and benefit microsimulation tools. This event underscored UNU-WIDER’s dedication to strengthening policymaking through targeted training and capacity-building initiatives.

COLLABORATION:

UNU-WIDER contributes to policy recommendations for the G20

UNU-WIDER contributed to a policy brief on tax expenditure reporting that was produced as part of Think20 (T20). The policy brief offers policy recommendations for the G20 Summit in Brazil in November 2024.



DEC

COLLABORATION:

UNU-WIDER at the Second Preparatory Committee Session for the 4th International Conference on

Financing for Development

During the 2nd preparatory committee session of the Financing for Development Conference, UNU-WIDER hosted panels focused on taxation and governance as levers for achieving SDGs. This participation emphasized the institute’s ongoing commitment to leveraging fiscal tools for sustainable development.



BOOK: Resources Matter Ending Poverty While Protecting Nature

Resources Matter explored leveraging extractive industries for sustainable development, addressing dilemmas in poverty reduction and nature conservation.

2024 in figures

222 publications

Journal articles	45
WIDER Working Papers	92
Books	9
Book chapters	47
WIDER Technical Notes	5
WIDER Reports	24

59%

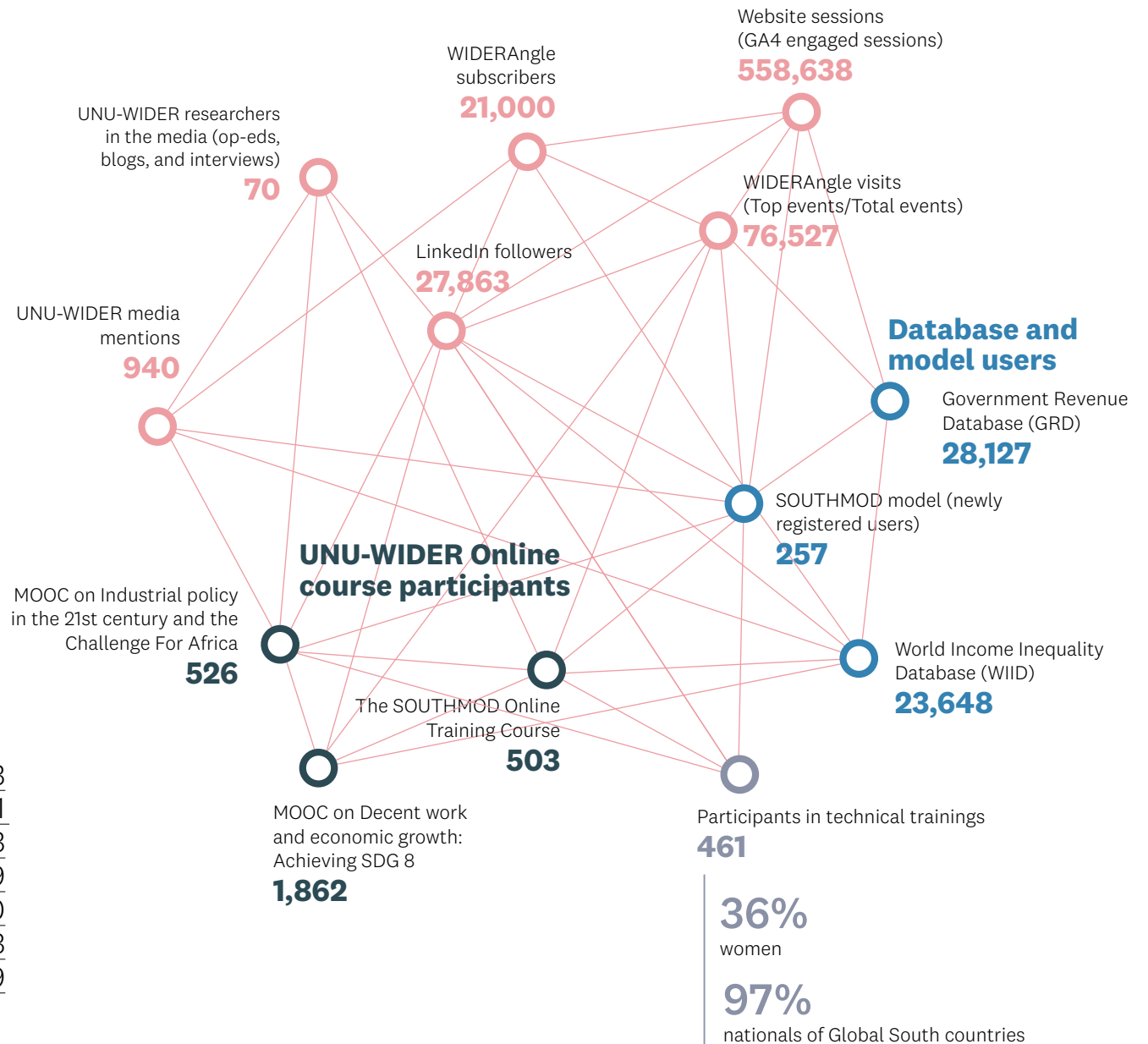
co-authored by women

56%

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

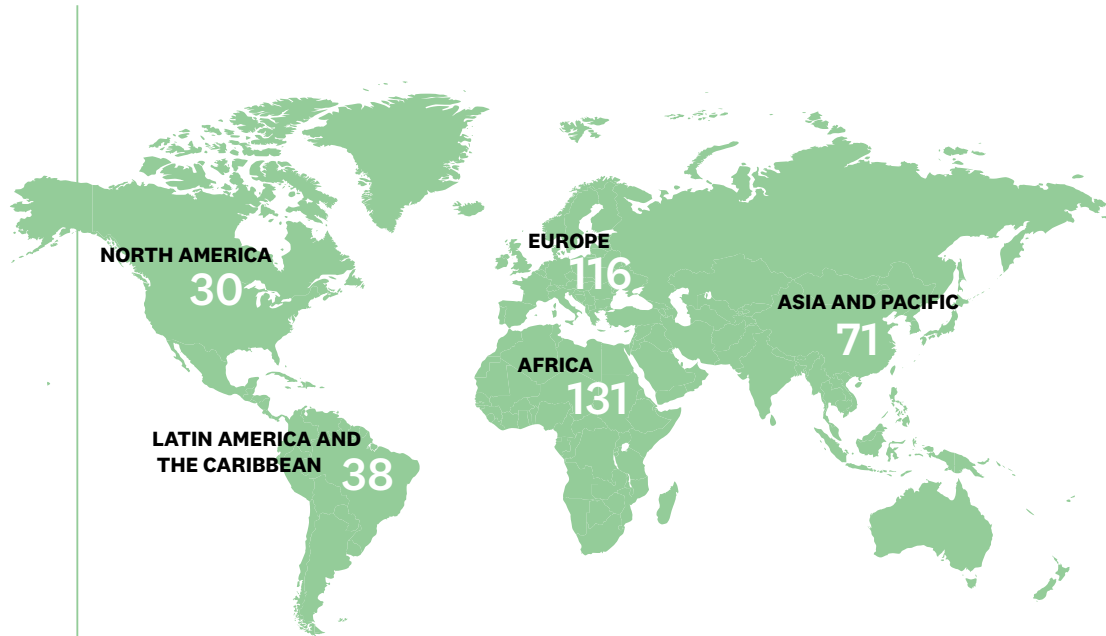
118 events

Conferences	3
WIDER Annual Lecture	1
Policy workshops	13
Research seminars	39
Project workshops	10
Technical trainings	23
Presentations	29



2024 in figures

Nationality of the 386 external researchers contributing to UNU-WIDER projects

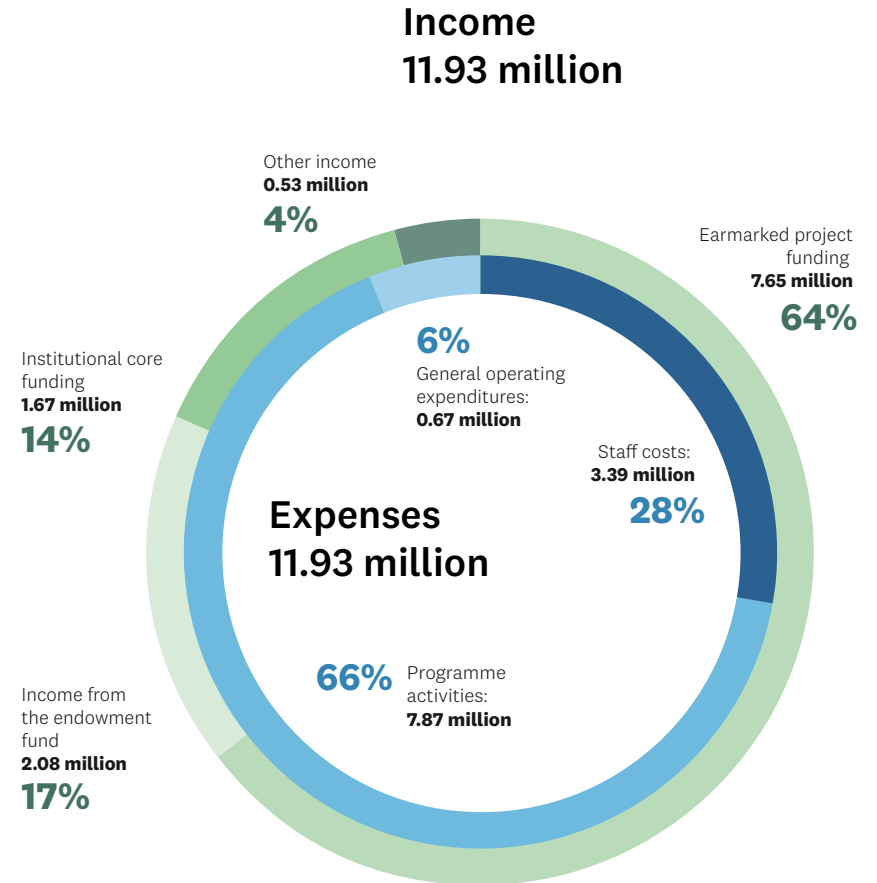


40%
are women

65
different nationalities

60%
nationals of Global South countries

Financials (in US\$)



Navigating a new era

- UNU-WIDER's role in a changing world



In the current landscape of global development, UNU-WIDER is poised to play a pivotal role, guided by the visionary principles outlined in Our Common Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These frameworks challenge us to harness solidarity, trust, and multilateral cooperation to secure a future that prioritizes the well-being of all humanity. At UNU-WIDER, we take these words as both a mandate and an inspiration. Our research and initiatives focus on strengthening the bonds of international partnership through equitable economic policies and sustainable development. The Agenda's call for a renewed social contract and strengthened solidarity between and within countries resonates deeply with our ongoing projects, especially in areas like social protection, inclusive statebuilding, fiscal reform, mitigating climate change, and addressing inequalities.

Looking ahead, UNU-WIDER is committed to contributing to a new global order that protects the interests of future generations. This involves a strategic engagement in major international platforms, including the upcoming 4th International Conference on Financing for Development, the 2nd World Summit for Social Development, and discussions on the reform of the international

financial architecture. These platforms offer unique opportunities to advocate for fairer, more inclusive policies that directly affect the economic stability and social security of billions of people worldwide.

As we look to the future, the challenges of multilateralism, breakdown of trust and rising inequalities are apparent, exacerbated by global political shifts and economic pressures. Yet, these challenges underscore the importance of institutions like UNU-WIDER to bridge divides and foster dialogue that leads to actionable solutions for the most pressing global issues. By standing for the voices of the Global South and promoting knowledge sharing, we play a critical role in shaping policies that enhance global cooperation and development.

The path forward for UNU-WIDER is clear. Guided by the principles of Our Common Agenda and the SDGs, we will continue to push the boundaries of development economics to serve not only as a research institute but also as a beacon of hope and innovation in the pursuit of a more equitable and sustainable future for all.

Patricia Justino
Deputy Director, UNU-WIDER

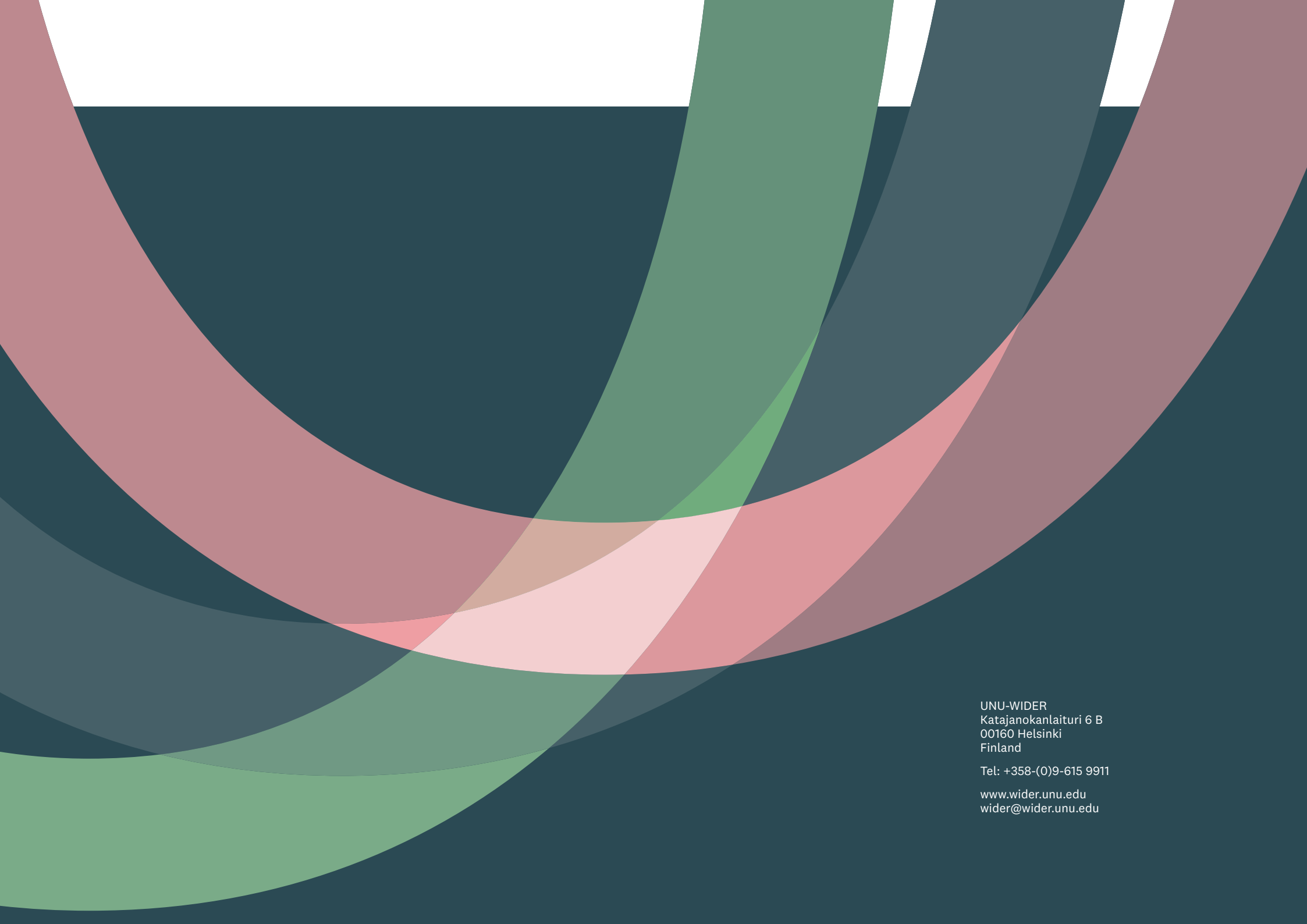


UNU-WIDER conference team in Maputo 2024

Donor acknowledgements

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With much gratitude, we acknowledge the support from the governments of Finland, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the European Union for our activities in 2024.



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