



CID 2025

ANNUAL LETTER



HARVARD CENTER
FOR INTERNATIONAL
DEVELOPMENT

It's a critical time for both international development and U.S. higher education.

Geopolitical instability, the collapse of traditional aid models, and accelerating technological change are reshaping development priorities. These shifts bring urgent challenges but also powerful opportunities for reinvention, collaboration, and bold leadership. At the [Harvard Center for International Development \(CID\)](#), we decisively pivoted during the 2024–2025 academic year to meet this new era.

Through policy-relevant research, high-profile convenings, global media engagement, and hands-on learning, CID strengthened its position as a leading public voice in reimagining development. At the same time, our deep investment in the next generation of talent expanded our community – bringing in new students, fellows, researchers, and policymakers committed to inclusive, evidence-driven development.

As Harvard's institutional home for international development, demand for CID's work continues to grow. Our 140+ Faculty Affiliates are advancing work in over 115 countries on topics ranging from trade and competitiveness to climate resiliency, modern social assistance, scalable education models, integrated public health systems, gender and cultural norms, and more. During our travels this year to London, Lisbon, Rabat, Riyadh, Lahore, Mumbai, Bangkok, Johor Bahru, Singapore, Jakarta, and Hong Kong, we met with leading policymakers and researchers eager to collaborate in new ways to address this rapidly evolving global landscape.

In the year ahead, CID will introduce a new vision for global development: From Poverty to Potential. This framework reimagines development moving beyond poverty reduction to a sustained investment in people, places, and ideas that maximizes human potential and drives inclusive growth.

We thrive because of the strength of our community. At our Harvard Kennedy School home, that energy is felt every day—from packed events and seminars to the 17,918 cups of coffee brewed in the CID Commons this year—more than double last year's total!

This is just a snapshot of the work underway. As we scale, we are embracing a bigger role than ever before – as a convener, catalyst, and champion for bold ideas and inclusive growth in a time of global uncertainty. A sincere thank you to our funders and champions for believing in us and making our work possible. And for those new to CID, join us – we need you more than ever to build a thriving world for all.

Asim I. Khwaja
Faculty Director

Fatema Z. Sumar
Executive Director

CID Builds

CID is equipping the next generation of global development leaders with the tools, networks, and experiences they need to drive real-world impact.

We are shaping global-ready leaders through funded, real-world experiences across the globe and in-depth learning experiences on campus. Through internships, student seminars, career chats, and workshops with leading practitioners and policymakers, our growing community of students, fellows, PhD, and faculty affiliates are helping to generate evidence-based solutions and catalyze change where it's needed most—from education access to economic resilience.



Providing a home for PhD students at Harvard:

This year, CID formally became the home for all 75+ PhD students across Harvard studying international development, creating new pathways for shared learning and professional growth.



Equipping students with real-world experience:

Through CID's Global Internship Program and J-Term funding, 50+ students worked in 14+ countries, gaining hands-on experience with local partners on key development challenges.



Building Global Development Fluency:

CID's Student Seminars on diverse topics such as AI, gender equity, and development finance, taught more than 200 students on key development issues—building practical insight, policy fluency, and global perspective.

Build by the Numbers

50+

50+ CID-sponsored student internships & research exchanges in over 14 countries

13 Harvard students traveled to the World Bank/IMF Spring Meetings in Washington, D.C.

13

200+

200+ seminar participants explored topics like AI, development finance, gender, and more

"CID has been a cornerstone of my academic and professional journey at Harvard—providing not only rigorous research opportunities but also a vibrant community committed to making development more inclusive, sustainable, and grounded in evidence."



Lili Vessereau,
HKS '25

CID Convenes

CID convenes global leaders to shape critical conversations in international development while immersing students in the frontlines of policy and practice.



Through high-profile events, our dynamic speaker series, and direct student and policymaker engagement, we are bridging research and real-world leadership to address urgent global challenges and inspire the next generation of changemakers. This year, CID hosted 185 events reaching over 2,500 participants from 60+ countries. We brought leading voices from across sectors—including former heads of state, ministers, scholars, and practitioners—to share insights on today's most urgent development challenges. From U.S. foreign aid to climate action, global health, and digital governance, our events sparked critical dialogue and elevated CID's role as a trusted convener and platform for global exchange.

Elevating Global Voices:

CID welcomed distinguished leaders including Dr. Barham Salih, former President of Iraq, and Claudia López Hernández, former mayor of Bogotá, Colombia. CID's speaker series offered opportunities to engage with leaders shaping the future.

Leveraging AI for Inclusive Development:

GEM25: Catalyzing AI for Inclusive Change and our Road to GEM welcomed 250+ leaders from 57 countries for a deep dive on how AI is shaping development from the perspective of emerging economies.



Reimagining Development During a Time of Crisis:

Our 6-part Future of U.S. Foreign Aid series convened top leaders across diplomacy, economics, and civil society—including World Bank President Ajay Banga—to examine emerging challenges and opportunities for development.

Convene by the Numbers

185

185 events hosted bringing together over 2,500 people in 60+ countries

85 attendees gathered at CID's first-ever alumni mixer in Washington, D.C.

85

250+

250+ attendees from 57 countries at GEM25: Catalyzing AI for Inclusive Change

CID Deploys

We catalyze new research collaborations and conduct rigorous studies to generate evidence and apply solutions to pressing development issues worldwide.

Amid a retreat in traditional development funding, CID faculty and affiliates led ambitious, policy-relevant research across social protection, trade, education, and more—preserving Harvard’s ability to produce high-impact, applied research when it’s needed most. In 2024–2025, our teams supported 24 new proposals and managed 28 active awards, generating insights that are shaping smarter, more resilient development strategies.

Since its launch two years ago, the GEM Incubation Fund has catalyzed 13 innovative research projects focused on climate change and gender equity. In 2025–2026, the fund will expand its focus to support new research at the intersection of AI and global development.



Amplifying Global Impact:

With 400M+ media reach and viral content, CID is emerging as a trusted voice in global development. Our CID Voices blog and podcast make research accessible, sparking policy dialogue and amplifying insights for broad, global audiences.

Turning Research into Action:

CID’s new Faculty Research Insights series translates complex faculty work into clear, policy-relevant briefs—bridging the gap between academic research and real-world impact with concise, actionable insights.



Deploy by the Numbers

26

26 CID research fellows working across 14 countries

13 research projects focused on climate & gender equity funded through GEM Incubation Fund

13

456

456 Faculty publications added to the CID Publications Database this year

Building Understanding and Finding Solutions to Current Global Challenges

CID faculty like Ebehi Iyoha tackle urgent issues—from tariffs to productivity—producing research with powerful policy implications for developing countries.

“During a turbulent year for research funding, CID actively supported faculty in navigating shifting landscapes and securing new opportunities—helping to ensure the continuity and impact of our work.”



Rema Hanna,
CID Faculty Affiliate



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