Governance and Inclusive Development (GID)
Vision, Themes and Approaches

GID Vision

Governance and Inclusive Development (GID) is a research group within the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research (AISSR), based in the Department of Human Geography, Planning and International Development Studies at the University of Amsterdam. Through research, education and social engagement, we foster a more just, sustainable and inclusive world. We do this by engaging with, examining and challenging dominant patterns and understandings of 'development', as a contested notion, and its relationship to (in)justice. We critically examine what has been done in the name of 'development' in the past and the present, and how the impacts of 'development' have been distributed among people and places. These insights allow us to (re)imagine the future of development that is more just, sustainable and inclusive.

Since its inception in the 1990s, the GID group has responded to and set research agendas for understanding the ever-changing field of international development studies. Transformations in political, environmental, economic, social, cultural and technological contexts can contribute to progress, but also to persisting, and often deepening injustices within and between population groups. As an interdisciplinary team, we scrutinise the underlying assumptions and premises of those transformations which exacerbate deepening inequality and injustice, from diverse perspectives and using different research methods. Our work focuses on linking up a range of themes to governance and inclusive development within and across the Global South and North, East and West. In addition, our research applies relational perspectives, highlighting the transnational/local and inter-scalar nature of development processes and their impacts.

Our work advances academic excellence, contributes to methodological innovation and focuses on impact. We work across academic disciplines and engage with stakeholders in sectors beyond academia and integrate diverse knowledges into our work.

Overarching Research Theme: Governance and Inclusive Development

Our overarching theme combines two core concepts: 'governance' and 'inclusive development'.

- *Governance* is the process of collective decision making and implementation. Appropriate governance in different settings is fundamental to achieving more just, sustainable and inclusive societies. We investigate the workings of governance in our diverse research contexts. We focus on policies, practices and contestations, and on the *who, why, what* and *how* of various processes to improve governance outcomes.
- We define *inclusive development* in terms of social inclusion (focusing on human well-being, regenerative economics and society) and ecological inclusion (as ecosystems are essential for preserving planetary health and human welfare, particularly of the marginalised). For us, inclusion is inherently relational, and we examine the underlying politics of such relations from local to global levels, with a focus on reducing persistent and emerging inequalities.

Three Focus Areas

Within this overarching theme, GID focuses on three intersecting areas:

- *Environmental justice in the Anthropocene* - Under this topic, we analyze human-environment relations, focusing on issues of access, rights, responsibilities and control over environmental resources. Our work makes visible the disproportionate exposure of marginalised groups to past and emerging ecological risks. We assess how socio-environmental inequalities and injustices are (re)produced in society through the entrenchment of dominant discourses and related technologies, infrastructures, instruments and governance. We also focus on transitions to a more sustainable future. Specific areas of focus include water, oceans/coasts, forests and climate change, across the urban-rural spectrum.

- *Global inequalities* - This topic addresses social inequalities, injustices and conflicts. We adopt an intersectional approach to examine the discursive, structural and multi-level causes and dynamics of poverty and systemic marginalisation that are produced and reproduced through global dynamics and their associated localised effects. We analyze different paradigms and theories concerned with social justice; the role of different actors, institutions and social movements; as well as technologies, instruments and infrastructures that affect (in)justice. Specific areas of focus include inclusive finance and wellbeing economics, migration, education, just labour practices, degrowth, food security, participatory governance and sustainable peacebuilding.

- *Politics of knowledge* - In examining the above, we also inquire into the politics of knowledge. Here we use an inclusive development lens and critical analytical approaches to examine development ideologies, hegemony, discourses and policy instruments from diverse perspectives, questioning whose knowledge counts and why, and how certain knowledges remain underrepresented in debates, policies and practices. Transdisciplinary research and the co-creation of knowledge are threads that run through and connect our research.

The GID Team

We are a team of scholars and educators with expertise in a diversity of disciplines (including geography, anthropology, economics, public policy, international relations and law), epistemological and methodological approaches. We are complemented by a group of colleagues from the IHE Delft Institute for Water Education who work on the politics of water governance. We also have many post-doctoral researchers and PhD candidates from different backgrounds who find a temporary home with us and conduct research in different parts of the world.

We are embedded in international networks of academics, development practitioners, policy-makers and civil society actors. We leverage these connections to co-create and share knowledge, and, in turn, make impact in policies and practices.

Education Programmes

The GID research programme is committed to engaging with new generations of scholars and practitioners who want to engage with contemporary global development challenges from critical perspectives. We bridge our research and teaching through three dedicated programmes:

- One-year MSc in International Development Studies (Study programme - Master International Development Studies - Universiteit van Amsterdam (uva.nl))

- Two-year Research Master's in International Development Studies (Research master International Development Studies (research) - Universiteit van Amsterdam (uva.nl))
- Minor in International Development Studies at Bachelor's level (Minor International Development Studies - University of Amsterdam (uva.nl).

Our courses are also offered in the Master in Urban and Regional Planning, the Master in Spatial Sustainability programmes and the Research Master Urban Studies

Affiliated Research Centres

GID hosts the Centre for Sustainable Development Studies (CSDS, est. 2015 [https://csds.uva.nl/]) and chairs the social-science Centre for Maritime Research (MARE, est. 2000 [http://www.marecentre.nl/]). Both centers create spaces to stimulate vibrant exchange of knowledge through events, academic journals, publications, newsletters and websites.