



# LATITUDE°

NEWS FROM THE INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**VOLUME 5 • ISSUE 1 • OCTOBER 2017**



*Republic Day 2017 celebrations in rural Rajasthan, India. Photo credit: Sonia Laszlo*

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*Latitude focuses on the work of the Institute for the Study of International Development with news about its research, publications and other activities, including contributions from regular and associated faculty, professors of practice, post-doctoral fellows, and current and former members, examining contemporary research in development, in theory and in practice.*



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## MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

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The past six months have seen continued growth at ISID in numbers and in activities. We are delighted to welcome our new colleague, Geographer Prof. Yann le Polain de Waroux. Prof. le Polain comes to us after completing a post-doctoral fellowship at Stanford and is our first joint appointment with the Faculty of Science (Geography). We feature some of his exciting new research, as well as a number of new initiatives at ISID in this issue of *Latitude*. First, we have launched a new and improved Policy Brief series in which you can read about the important and policy-relevant work by ISID faculty. Second, ISID was able to support a number of graduate students' fieldwork, which you can read in the following pages. Third, we formally launched the GrOW Research Series, highlighting research output from the Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) projects funded by IDRC, DfID, and the Hewlett Foundation. Finally, we are delighted to announce the theme of our annual conference, "Unpacking Women's Empowerment: Implications for Research, Policy and Practice", which will be held on March 15 and 16, 2018. Thank you for taking the time to read our latest newsletter, and we hope to see you at our regular speaker series, and at the March conference.

*Sonia Laszlo, Director*

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## NEW POLICY BRIEFS

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Institute for the Study of International Development (ISID), McGill University



### POLICY BRIEF

PB-2017-06



#### Trade restrictions lead to lower wages and more violence:

**Although motivated by security considerations, the Israeli restrictions on imports to the OPT have negative economic and political consequences**

To address security concerns, governments often implement trade barriers and restrictions on the movement of goods and people. A new study from the Occupied Palestinian Territories documents the negative effects of these trade restrictions on the target economy, and their implications for political violence. Amodio, Bacchini and Di Maio (2017) show that the import restrictions imposed by Israel on the West Bank have a negative effect on industrial output and wages in those sectors and localities where production is more dependent upon restricted inputs. They also find that episodes of political violence increased in these localities relative to others.

#### WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Issues of security and trade dominate the current political debate, and these issues are often interlinked. States routinely implement restrictions on trade that are motivated by security reasons. The most recent example is China who has issued a lengthy list of

#### KEY RESULTS

- Import restrictions of dual-use goods and materials led to lower output and wages paid in sectors using those materials more intensively as production inputs
- Local labor market conditions worsened in areas where employment is concentrated in these sectors
- Episodes of political violence were more likely to occur in those same localities as a consequence
- Security-motivated trade restrictions have a negative effect on industrial output and local labor markets
- Economic integration could bring possibly high returns in terms of political stabilization

This year, ISID published the following policy briefs:

#### **Kazue Takamura and Erik Kuhonta [PB-2017-07]** **["Human Rights of Non-Status Migrants in Japan"](#)**

This brief examines the precarious conditions of detained asylum-seekers in Japan, focusing on the human rights concerns that have arisen from the Japanese state's use of immigration law.

#### **Francesco Amodio and Michele Di Maio [PB-2017-06]** **["Trade restrictions lead to lower wages and more violence"](#)**

The authors analyze the consequences of the various trade barriers enacted by the Israeli government on the Occupied Palestinian Territories, highlighting their effects on the region's economy and security.

#### **Rachael Garret, Eric Lambin, and Yann le Polain de Waroux [PB-2017-05]**

#### **["To eliminate deforestation in South America, reduce differences in regulations across regions and actors"](#)**

This paper addresses the issue of forest conservation in South America, finding that a standardization of conservation regulations across the region could help limit currently-rapid deforestation rates.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH

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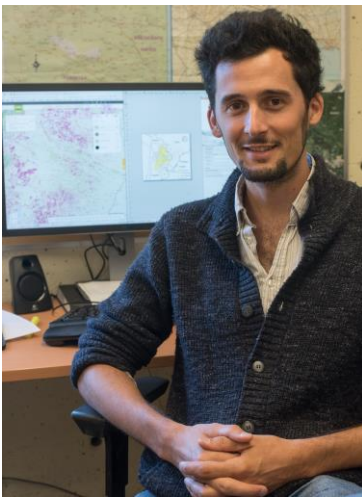


Photo credit: Gabriel Helfant

### Yann le Polain de Waroux

Assistant Professor, Department of Geography and ISID

Yann le Polain joined ISID in August 2017. His research focuses on understanding how local land use and livelihood decisions influence and are influenced by dynamics at other scales, and what this means for development and sustainability in rural areas of the Global South. His early work was in Southern Morocco, where he studied the livelihood and environmental changes associated with globalization in rural areas. More recently, he has been studying land use change in agricultural commodity frontiers, with particular focus on the Gran Chaco, a dry woodland ecoregion undergoing rapid deforestation in Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay.

Le Polain's current work centers on three themes. The first is improving our understanding of agricultural expansion in commodity frontiers. There has been plenty of work on agricultural frontiers, but recent evolutions towards a greater prevalence of large-scale farms call for a new conceptual framing of these frontiers. Le Polain's recent paper in the *Annals of the American Association of Geographers* proposes such a new framing, based on the case of the Gran Chaco.

A second theme is land governance in a connected world. People studying land systems are increasingly recognizing that land use changes in one place are not independent from changes in others. This raises important questions for governance, such as how to increase environmental regulations without displacing environmentally damaging activities abroad. Le Polain is engaged in several collaborations tackling these questions from various methodological angles. As part of these efforts, he recently published an ISID policy brief on eliminating deforestation in South America.

Increasingly, le Polain is also interested in a third theme, that of adaptation and sustainability in commodity frontiers. Commercial farmers in frontiers operate in information-poor environments, and risk making decisions that lead to soil degradation. Smallholders and indigenous people, on the other hand, cannot compete on equal terms with expanding commercial agriculture, and are often forced to develop alternative livelihood strategies to accommodate these new landscapes. Le Polain's future research will attempt to understand the ways in which these two groups learn and adapt their practices, and how adaptation mechanisms can be supported to foster sustainability and development.

### RECENT PUBLICATIONS

**le Polain de Waroux, Y.**, Baumann, M., Gasparri, N.I., Gavier-Pizarro, G., Godar, J., Kuemmerle, T., Müller, R., Vázquez, F., Volante, J.N. & Meyfroidt, P. (2017) [Rents, actors, and the expansion of commodity frontiers in the Gran Chaco](#). *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*.

**le Polain de Waroux, Y.**, Garrett, R. D., Graesser, J., Nolte, C., White, C., & Lambin, E. F. (2017). [The restructuring of South American soy and beef production and trade under changing environmental regulations](#). *World Development* (in press, available online 5 July 2017).

**le Polain de Waroux, Y.**, Garrett, R., Heilmayr, R., & Lambin, E.F. (2016). [Land use policies and corporate investments in agriculture in the Gran Chaco](#). *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science*. 113(15): 4021-4026.

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 SPOTLIGHT ON DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH
 

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## Megan Bradley

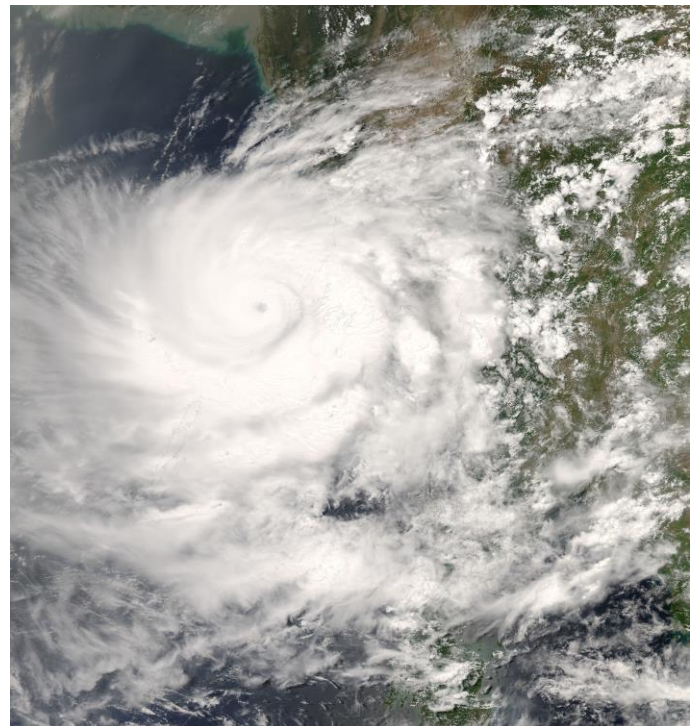
Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science and ISID

Since joining ISID and the Department of Political Science in 2014, Megan Bradley has garnered multiple research grants to deepen her investigations into the challenges of forced migration in contemporary world politics. Her Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) Insight Grant on the politics of international organizations (IOs) in the humanitarian sphere focuses in particular on the causes and implications of the rapid growth of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). A relatively understudied organization, IOM is now amongst the largest IOs active in the humanitarian sector, with an increasingly pronounced effect on global governance, particularly in relation to migration, human rights, and involvement in responses to humanitarian emergencies in the global South. These activities have significant and complex effects on purported “beneficiaries,” states, and humanitarian governance. From 2015-2017 Bradley conducted 53 in-depth interviews with IOM and member state officials, human rights advocates and humanitarians working with UN agencies and NGOs. This fall, she is finalizing the book manuscript to emerge from this project, *The International Organization for Migration: Challenges and Complexities of a Rising Humanitarian Actor*, which is under contract to appear in the Routledge Global Institutions series.

See the recent publication by Bradley (2017), “[The International Organization for Migration \(IOM\): Gaining Power in the Forced Migration Regime](#),” *Refuge* 33(1): 91-106.

Bradley has also received SSHRC and FRQSC grants to study the relationship between transitional justice, displacement, and disasters. While disasters inevitably entail losses, many are also characterized by grave injustices. For example, post-disaster assistance may be inadequate, discriminatory, or non-existent, as in the case of Cyclone Nargis in Burma, where the regime purposefully denied its citizens life-saving aid. Although disasters are often the site of systematic violations and can catalyze major transitions, grave injustices associated with disasters have rarely been addressed through transitional justice processes, and few scholars have questioned this exclusion.

With SSHRC support Bradley has conducted fieldwork in post-disaster sites in the United States, including in relation to the commemoration of the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans. With support from FRQSC, and in cooperation with McGill postdoctoral fellow Dr. Mohamed Sesay, Bradley will also be exploring these questions in relation to the major mudslides that hit Freetown, Sierra Leone, in 2017.



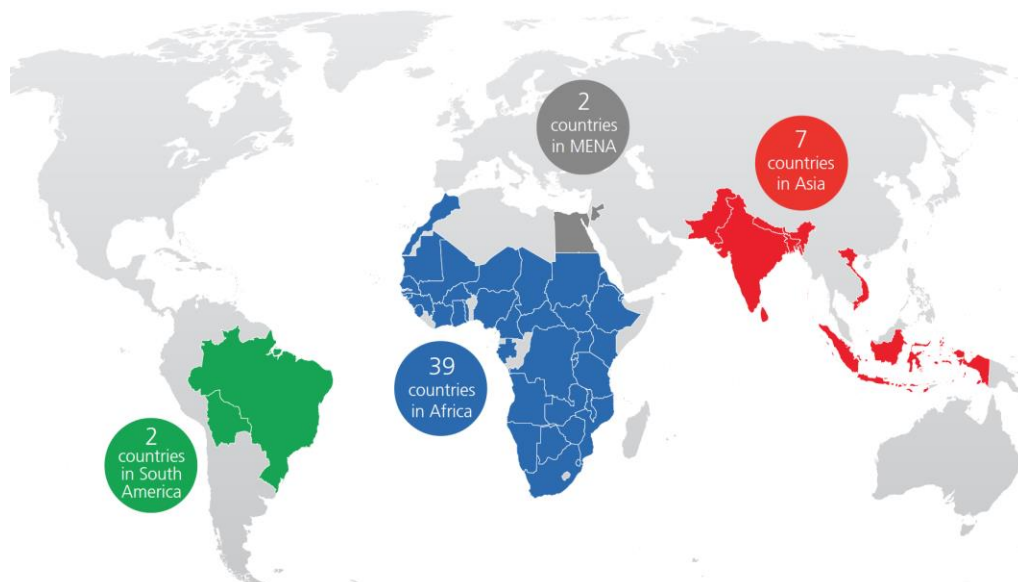
*Cyclone Nargis over Myanmar, May 2008. Photo credit: NASA*

The first article from this project by Bradley, entitled “[More than Misfortune: Recognizing Natural Disasters as a Concern for Transitional Justice](#),” was recently published in the *International Journal of Transitional Justice*.

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## GROW RESEARCH SERIES

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*Location of GrOW-funded projects around the world*

As part of a broader initiative by ISID and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the GrOW Research Series (GRS) brings together scholarly research on women's economic empowerment and economic growth in low-income countries. Through the dissemination of working papers, policy briefs and other original scholarship, the [GRS website](#) serves as an online, open access platform to showcase current research with a view to promoting evidence-based policy-making.

The GRS is also the official, though not exclusive, research platform for the **Growth and Economic Opportunities for Women (GrOW) program**, a multi-funder partnership between the UK Government's Department for International Development, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, and IDRC. With 14 projects in 50 countries, the GrOW program works with researchers to improve economic outcomes and opportunities for poor women on the themes of employment, the care economy, and women's economic agency. Each of these 14 projects is generating new data on different dimensions of women's economic empowerment, and the GRS website serves as a host, or repository, for this global body of evidence.

Officially launched in May 2017, the GRS has seen considerable success circulating working papers and policy briefs on a variety of topics, from the role of gender in artisanal and small-scale mining, to the impact of economic reforms on gender equality in China. All the works published this past summer showcased the results and recommendations of research funded by the GrOW program. This includes working papers from two McGill-led GrOW studies, one on **improving child care options to promote maternal employment outcomes in Nairobi slums**, and another on **the influence of affordable daycare on women's empowerment in India**.

Starting this Fall, the GRS is accepting paper submissions from authors outside of the GrOW program! We invite manuscript submissions on a variety of topics related to women's economic empowerment and economic growth. Submissions must be well-written and concisely formulated, and should be of interest to researchers and policy makers. Those who are interested can visit the "[Submit Papers](#)" page on our website for more information.

An additional and exciting feature of the GRS is our bi-monthly [research bulletin](#), which features current news, research, interviews, and discussion pieces on women's empowerment written by Canadian development scholars and practitioners. Our latest issue ([September 2017](#)) includes a feature piece by Wanda Bedard, founder and president of the Montreal-based *60 million girls foundation*, outlining her organization's approach to meet Sustainable Development Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. Also featured in this issue is an interview with Dr. Rebecca Tiessen and Dr. Stephan Barayni on the process and motivation behind their new edited collection, *Obligations and Omissions: Canada's Ambiguous Actions on Gender Equality* (2017), and a review of insights generated from a one-day conference on the 'Global Need for Formal Childcare,' hosted by the Centre on Population Dynamics at McGill. This is just the beginning for the GRS. Keep an eye on [our website](#) to learn about upcoming research, news, and events!

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## PROFESSOR OF PRACTICE PROFILE: TIMOTHY HODGES

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Professor of Practice Timothy Hodges is continuing his work of understanding how indigenous communities in both the South and the North participate in and benefit from the implementation of international sustainable development treaties (such as the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biological Diversity). Currently, he is reviewing the experience of Indigenous Peoples representatives in negotiating the Nagoya Protocol on access to and benefit sharing (ABS) from genetic resources and traditional knowledge, and he is also developing case studies on indigenous community implementation of the Protocol.

Hodges served as a co-chair of the Nagoya Protocol negotiations, giving him a unique opportunity not only to observe the many challenges encountered by Indigenous Peoples in international treaty-making, but also to facilitate the impact of indigenous representatives on the ultimate shape of such legally-binding instruments.

The Nagoya Protocol was adopted in October 2010 and entered into force four years later. 100 countries are now parties to the treaty and the number is steadily increasing. The Protocol operationalizes the 'Grand Bargain' of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD): the sharing of benefits derived from the utilization (usually in the North) of genetic resources with the countries where they were obtained. In return for receiving a more equitable share of these benefits, developing countries, which hold much of the world's biodiversity, are required to continue to conserve and sustainably use such resources. Canada is Party to the CBD and serves as host to the CBD Secretariat, located in Montreal.

As the custodians of their lands and natural resources, Indigenous Peoples and local communities have a central role to play in determining the success of the Protocol. Their traditional knowledge and practices, embedded in their cultural heritage, play an important role in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, as do their customary laws and local governance structures. In his recent case studies, Hodges has found that barriers to successful implementation of the Protocol include lack of awareness of the treaty, disinformation, insufficient technical and legal capacity, and the failure of national governments to consult with Indigenous Peoples.

Despite the close involvement of Canadians in the development of the Nagoya Protocol, Canada has not signed the treaty and there has been an apparent hiatus of work on this issue within the federal government over the past decade. But Hodges believes that a new impetus is building in Canada at the community level to move forward, as part of the project of reconciliation and the commitment to implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

*Timothy Hodges was Co-Chair of the Working Group on Access and Benefit Sharing of Genetic Resources (ABS) under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) from 2006 to 2010. A former career diplomat, he has been involved in a wide range of international files relating to technology transfer, science policy, biotechnology, intellectual property rights, genetic resources, indigenous issues, global change and circumpolar affairs – negotiated under the G8, WTO, UN CBD, UNFCCC, CSD, UNESCO, APEC, FAO, NAFTA, OAS, OECD, and numerous other international organizations.*

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## PROFESSORS OF PRACTICE – PHD AND POSTDOC RESEARCH WORKSHOP

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In March 2017, ISID held its first research workshop where PhD students, visiting academics, and postdoctoral researchers presented their research projects to an audience composed of ISID Professors of Practice.

The day proved to be informative and stimulating for all involved, generating fruitful conversations between academic researchers and practitioners that explored the implications of research for understanding, explaining, and evaluating various institutions, agents, and practices of international development.

ISID looks forward to holding the second PoPs-Research Workshop on the afternoon of Wednesday, March 14, 2018. Details will be posted on the ISID website. Stay tuned!



*Left to Right: Mohamed Sesay, Patrick Brennan, Michael Brown, Eric Hirsch, Shannon Gorman*



*Professor of Practice Rachel Kiddell-Monroe*

### **The presenters of the March 2017 workshop:**

- S.P. Harish (Postdoctoral fellow in Global Governance, ISID):  
'Why Target Candidates, Not Voters: Pre-election Violence in Indonesia'
- Erich Hirsch (Postdoctoral fellow in Global Governance, ISID):  
'Investing in Indigeneity: Development and the Politics of Abundance in Peru'
- Weeda Mehran (Visiting scholar, ISID): 'Militant Children on Social Media'
- Mohamed Sesay (Postdoctoral fellow in Global Justice, Yan P. Lin Centre):  
'Inhibiting Access to Justice by Global Standards: The Internationalization of the Rule of Law in Post-conflict Sierra Leone and Liberia'
- Soyoon Weon (PhD candidate, School of Social Work):  
'The Association of the Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) with women's food security in Ethiopia'

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## ISID FIELD RESEARCH AWARD REPORTS

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*This summer, ISID gave Field Research Awards to MA and PhD students to support their research or dissertation projects related to international development studies. Here are the first three reports from students who have returned from the field.*

### **Abe Solberg, MA student, Geography**

*Research Topic: 'Exploring livelihood change in a rural upland Hmong village in Yunnan, China'*

The aim of my MA project was to see if Hmong livelihoods in a rural upland village in Yunnan, China have changed over the last 20 years, and how and why livelihoods have changed. Preliminary results indicate that, in the village, Hmong livelihoods, while still largely based on semi-subsistence agriculture, increasingly rely on remittances from wage labor in Eastern cities.

Between May 25 and August 30, 2017, thanks to a ISID Field Research Award, I had the opportunity to (1) enroll in five weeks of intensive one-on-one Mandarin Chinese courses; (2) conduct seven weeks of ethnographic fieldwork in a rural village in Southwestern Yunnan, China; and (3) travel to Vietnam to meet with key informants and compare Hmong villages across state lines. The language courses were instrumental in increasing my language ability, and although the majority of interviews were in the local Hmong language, the courses allowed me to converse casually and to build relationships with informants.

After completing the language courses, I traveled to a rural Hmong village in Wenshan prefecture, Yunnan, China to conduct ethnographic research. Throughout the span of seven weeks, I conducted over 40 in-depth interviews, 10 oral-history interviews, and several informal focus groups. During my fieldwork, I lived with a local family and worked with two research assistants. While in the field, I also participated in the rice planting, corn harvesting, and alcohol production processes. We also traveled to four neighboring villages to compare how location, infrastructure, and government initiatives have impacted livelihoods of local villagers. Toward the end of my fieldwork, I traveled to Wenshan City, Yunnan to interview Hmong migrants and entrepreneurs.

I also had the opportunity to travel to Sapa, Vietnam to interview key informants. This was a valuable opportunity to compare how Hmong culture and livelihoods manifest themselves across state lines. It was also an opportunity to see how hemp is used in Hmong livelihoods in Vietnam, because hemp cultivation is illegal in China.

### **Lou Pingeot, PhD student, Political Science**

*Dissertation research: 'From Protection of Civilians to Policing of Civilians: Haiti'*

My PhD research examines the evolution of United Nations-led peace operations, using Haiti as a case study. While the UN Stabilization Mission for Haiti (MINUSTAH, 2004-2017) was ostensibly deployed to prevent a civil war between partisans and opponents of deposed President Aristide, the mission soon identified criminal "gangs" and "bandits" as a threat to stability



*Rural upland Hmong village in Yunnan, China.  
Photo credit: Abe Solberg*





*MINUSTAH Logistics Base, Port-au-Prince.  
Photo credit: Lou Pinget*

in Haiti, and therefore a threat to international peace and security. In addition to conducting muscular joint military-police raids against gangs, MINUSTAH has focused on support for the Haitian police and the criminal justice system as part of its mandate to strengthen the rule of law and maintain public order.

Thanks in part to the ISID Field Research Award, I traveled to Port-au-Prince in May-July 2017 to conduct interviews with members of MINUSTAH as well as representatives of the Haitian government and of Haitian civil society. As MINUSTAH was preparing to leave, the idea was to get people to reflect on the mission's 13-year presence in the country in light of the absence of either civil or international conflict, as well as to hear about the day-to-day activities of the mission.

My fieldwork in Haiti allowed me to better understand the discourse, practice, and effects of this new form of intervention. Discursively, MINUSTAH's intervention was marked by a criminalization of conflict, which de-emphasizes political, social and economic dynamics and equates conflict with breaking the law, therefore calling for punitive responses. In practice, this has led to a "police-ization" of peacekeeping, with an increase in the number of police contingents and a blurring of lines between police and military functions. Concretely, MINUSTAH's efforts have often ended up equating poverty, criminality and insecurity, thus targeting poor neighborhoods (labeled as "red zones") and already marginalized populations. In this context, UN peace operations' efforts to restore and uphold "the rule of law" are far from neutral technical exercises, and may even amount to lawfare using law enforcement to resolve conflicts undemocratically.

### **Mélie Monnerat, PhD student, Geography**

*Dissertation research: 'The price of spice: how high value non-timber forest product commodity chains influence ethnic minority livelihoods in northern Vietnam'*

The ISID Field Research Award supported my preliminary field research in Vietnam in the summer of 2017. My research aims to investigate the complexity of cinnamon commodity chains. Specifically, I examine nodes along the chain originating with ethnic minority cultivators in upland Northern Vietnam to global consumers, and I explore the roles of ethnicity, agency, social networks, and trust at each node to understand the benefits and drawbacks for the individuals involved.

I had the opportunity to meet and work with my research lab's institutional partners from Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment (HUNRE); to travel to rural areas where I met with cinnamon farmers, traders, and ethnic minority individuals; to interview spices traders in markets across the capital city of Hanoi; and to conduct research at key documentation centers.

I joined my PhD committee member Dr. Annuska Derks (Zurich University) on a research trip to Yen Bai Province and conducted interviews with farmers and ethnic minorities involved in cinnamon production and trading. Yen Bai Province is the largest national producer of cinnamon in Vietnam. With Dr. Derks, we conducted interviews with district and commune officers, Yao farmers involved in cinnamon production, cinnamon traders, and workers. We also had the chance to visit a family-run cinnamon plantation.

These and other solo rural fieldtrips were highly valuable in expanding my knowledge and understanding of the core aspects of my research. In addition, I scheduled research sessions at two key documentation centers: the Hanoi National Library and the Vietnam Academy of Social Science (VASS).

This trip to Vietnam gave me a chance to meet and build connections and friendships with Vietnamese researchers working on similar research topics, and with other foreign PhD students working on spices and commodity chains in Vietnam. The chance to network with other researchers in my field was valuable and exciting.



*Kinh ladies trimming cinnamon branches further used to make cinnamon oil. Van Yen district, Yen Bai, Vietnam, June 2017.*

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## FROM CLASSROOM TO FIELDWORK

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Zua is a non-profit organization that uses emerging technologies in microfinance and insurance to disrupt the cycle of poverty. Individuals who depend on agriculture in developing countries are vulnerable to a wide range of climate-induced risks that impede socioeconomic development. Those risks posed by weather can not only trap entire communities in a cycle of poverty, but can also impede farmers from taking risks and investing in measures that could increase their productivity and improve their socioeconomic status. By providing affordable microinsurance to some of the world's poorest, Zua hopes to equip farmers with the safety nets and tools they need to make life-improving investments in themselves and their families.



*Zua's Meagan Prins with Royce and Mailess, explaining how they harvest the vegetables grown in their garden. Photo credit: Brendan McKinney*

Zua was founded by two McGill students, Brenden McKinney and Meagan Prins, and was built on the knowledge they developed through their IDS, economic development, and finance classes. One of the sparks that led to the founding of Zua came from INTD lectures on gender in development and on the critiques of microfinance.

This year, Zua is launching two pilot projects in rural communities in Central Zambia, where it will provide indexed-based rainfall insurance to local farmers. Through the utilization of new technologies, peer-to-peer financing and donations, Zua is able to provide financial services at heavily subsidized prices, enabling the organization to target those most in need of risk management solutions.

To learn more about Zua and their work, please visit [their website](#).

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## EXECUTIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM

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In June 2017, ISID, Emerging Leaders' Dialogues Canada, and Vancouver Island University held "The Emerging Leaders for Sustainable Community Development" program, which explored models of sustainable development, reconciliation and governance from a domestic and international perspective. The program themes were ethics and good governance; inclusiveness, diversity and community engagement; collaborative leadership; and, sustainability.

From June 4-10, this program brought together 38 emerging leaders for three days of classroom work and three days of study tours on Vancouver Island. The themes covered included the following:

1. Leadership Experiences;
2. The Importance of Voice and Participation;
3. Creating Opportunities;
4. Social and Public Programs to Promote Leadership;
5. Leadership and Identity-Creation; and
6. Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Perspectives on the Environment.

The participants discussed challenges and strategies with leaders from band councils, business, labour unions, government departments as well as civil society organizations. This cross-sector approach exposed participants to a range of issues from multiple perspectives, and provided them with a unique opportunity to look beyond the scope of their current professional context. The insights gained from the program promoted understanding, connection and informed the final project work.

On September 27, 2017, ISID delivered a customized professional education certificate program to 30 officials at Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) on the theme of "Reconciliation in Domestic and International Contexts – Policy Implications of Current Research." The program was designed to provide participants with an overview of current research on domestic and international theories and practices of reconciliation, and their policy implications, and examined the main strengths and weaknesses of contemporary reconciliation practices, with a view to improving institutional responses to real issues. ISID's faculty contributions focused on an examination of international best practices for addressing reconciliation, and methodologies and tools designed to measure progress on reconciliation.

Moving from theory to practice, the afternoon portion of the program focused on implementing reconciliation in the Canadian context. This session thoroughly examined the opportunities and challenges for implementing reconciliation in the Canadian context using the findings of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission as a framework.

Based on the Institute's multidisciplinary research orientation, and with the vast array of practical development experience represented by our networks in the public, private and civil society realms, the program:

- Examined the issues of reconciliation from both domestic and international perspectives;
- Explored the use of research in the elaboration of policies that address reconciliation;
- Explored the practical application of reconciliation to policies and programs;
- Provided practical solutions that help to align and harmonize approaches to address reconciliation; and
- Helped managers and practitioners understand how to navigate through the requirements and responsibilities for reconciliation and create, implement and manage collaborative approaches based on respect.

*Patrick Brennan, Executive Director*

*Vancouver Island University Campus, Nanaimo. Photo credit: Vancouver Island University*



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## 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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# Unpacking Women's Empowerment: Implications for Research, Policy, and Practice

March 15-16, 2018, Faculty Club

Since the 1970s, governments and various civil society actors at international and domestic levels have engaged in legal, political, economic, and social efforts to advance diverse visions of women's empowerment. Yet, more work needs to be done to clarify what constitutes women's empowerment in contemporary circumstances, and how to evaluate various policies or practices in terms of their impact on promoting various forms of women's empowerment. These tasks are complicated by the diversity of development contexts, as well as the multidimensional nature of factors affecting women's empowerment. They are also especially policy relevant given Canada's new *Feminist International Assistance Policy* aimed at promoting gender equality in aid programming.



*Potato vendor in Tarma's market, Junin, Peru. Photo credit: Sonia Laszlo*

ISID's annual conference on March 15-16, 2018 presents a valuable opportunity "unpack" the agenda of women's empowerment in global development, with an interdisciplinary group of experts who will discuss contemporary challenges and opportunities for research, policy and practice, as well as examine some of the recent evidence on empowerment initiatives in resource-poor settings. The conference will focus on various challenges that confront scholars and policy makers seeking to construct policies and assess their impact on increasing women's autonomy, voice, and/or well-being in the household, civil society, and national politics. Some of these challenges include the difficulties associated with how to measure and benchmark progress toward achieving women's empowerment in diverse development contexts, as well as concerns that, increasingly, the design and implementation of women's empowerment policies obscure their politically contested nature. Other challenges have to do with how to incorporate evidence of social and political backlash in assessing the impact and success of various policies.

This conference will also highlight ISID's current partnership with Canada's International Development Research Center (IDRC), to disseminate the results of their \$17.5 million women's economic empowerment program, GrOW, taking place in over 50 countries around the world. We must take advantage of this opportune moment in Canadian politics to unpack the concept of women's empowerment and move the national and international agenda forward.