

Centre for Global Development

NEWSLETTER

February 2026



Editorial

Welcome to the CGD Newsletter! The newsletter showcases the work of our members and celebrates the achievements of the CGD community, while fostering new opportunities for collaboration.

This issue highlights a wide range of accomplishments of CGD members from the past semester, including several publications, grant success, research visits, and student awards.

Help us grow our research community by sharing this newsletter with colleagues, peers, and anyone who might find it relevant.

If you would like to include updates in next semester's newsletter, please send your submissions to cgd@leeds.ac.uk.

CGD Team

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Latest Publications from CGD Researchers

- **Dyer, C., Jacob, S. and Choksi, A. 2026.** Accountability for learning in contexts of fragile school attendance in India. International Journal of Educational Development. 121. p. 103485.
- **Goodwin, G. 2026.** Understanding the roles of decommodification in socioecological transformations: a new theoretical approach. New Political Economy. pp. 1-22.
- **Hyde-Smith, L. K., Ddiba, D., Dickin, S., Kiogora, D., Mdee, A. L., Reinfelder, V., ... & Evans, B. (2025).** Business-as-usual and fantasy planning—an analysis of equity within climate adaptation planning for sanitation in Nairobi. PloS one, 20(12), e0339272.
- **Malik, I.H., Ford, J. D., Way, R.G., et al. 2025.** Political ecology of climate change adaptation in the Arctic: Insights from Nunatsiavut, Canada. Nature (Humanities and Social Sciences Communications.) 12(1790).
- **Nagheeb, M., Mdee, A., Amezaga, J., Heller, L., Nicol, A., Pena-Varon, M. R., ... and Figueroa-Benitez, A. (2025).** Escaping the Capitalist Black Hole: dethroning Mammon and liberating water. Third World Quarterly, 1-15.
- **Nakayi, R. and Wiegatz, J. 2025.** Uganda's land eviction crisis: do populist state measures actually fix problems? July 27. The Conversation.
- **Salverda, T., Lanzano, C., and Wiegatz, J. eds., 2025.** Moral Economies of Distribution and Redistribution in Africa. The Right and Wrong of Who Gets (and Gives) What and Why. London: Routledge

International Research Spotlight

CGD Co-Director Dr Geoff Goodwin visited Kolkata in early January to continue his SRIF-funded collaborative research on public drinking water fountains in the city. The project has involved auditing and mapping nearly 200 fountains and conducting ethnographic research in four diverse sites in the city. On this trip, Dr Goodwin visited the field sites with his collaborators - Dr Chandni Mehta and Dr Garima Dhabhai - and started working on the first publication from the research. A public-facing, non-academic report, which will raise awareness of the fountains, will also be produced.

Among other things, the research has illustrated the importance of infrastructural maintenance and labour and understanding infrastructures as processes rather than static configurations. The first article from the research will focus on these dimensions, building on cross-disciplinary critical infrastructure scholarship. The project is deepening collaboration between the University of Leeds and Presidency University following the signing of a MoU between the two universities in 2025.



CGD Researchers to Explore the Role of River Rights in Brazil

A team of CGD members, led by Dr Markus Fraundorfer, were successful in obtaining funding for a four-year project entitled “Governing rivers as legal persons: Developing a kin-centric rights framework to address Brazil’s river crisis”. The other CGD members are Dr Geoff Goodwin and Dr Anna Grimaldi, as well as Ann Marie Boyle from water@leeds. The CGD team will collaborate with an interdisciplinary team of researchers from São Paulo State University (UNESP) and two external partners (the São Paulo-based NGO MAPAS and the global environmental activist network Guardians Worldwide). The project will receive funding from the UK’s Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) (£993,924) and the São Paulo Research Agency (FAPESP) (~£98,600).

The project will explore (1) whether recent efforts to grant legal rights to rivers are an effective way to address Brazil’s river crisis and (2) to what extent centuries-old kin-centric traditions in Brazil, embraced by indigenous and other riverine communities, have shaped these recent advocacy efforts for river rights in Brazil.

Brazil’s large rivers and ecosystems, not least the Amazon River Basin, are fundamental in regulating the South American and global climate. But Brazil’s rivers are under threat.



Photo by Neil Palmer/CIAT

Devastating droughts and rivers with record-low water levels are the ‘new normal’. Many river basins are heavily polluted by toxic mining activities and industrial agriculture, which have resulted in devastating ecological disasters, destroying indigenous and riverine communities’ livelihoods, wrecking ecosystems and pushing many animal species closer to extinction. A growing body of literature regards the modern understanding of rivers as commodities to be exploited for material gain as the root of this river crisis.

Since 2018, the Brazilian Rights of Nature (RoN) movement has secured legal rights for several rivers and water bodies across Brazil. The global RoN movement advocates for the recognition of non-human beings and parts of nature (rivers, forests and mountains) as legal persons. Based on an interdisciplinary approach, the project will critically explore to what extent the RoN movement can confront the status quo view of rivers as commodities and establish a novel paradigm inspired by kinship practices. A kin-centric understanding sees rivers as kin-like persons and part of an ecological family intimately intertwined with our own health and wellbeing. This kin-centric understanding of rivers can inspire new river governance models to improve legal and political protections for rivers, their ecosystems and riverine communities in Brazil and worldwide.

The project will focus on four cases in Brazil where legal rights have been granted to rivers/waterbodies (the water sources of Bonito, Pernambuco; the Laje River in Guajar-Mirim, Rond-nia; the Vermelho River in the city of Goi-s (UNESCO World Heritage Site), Goais; and the waves at the mouth of the Doce River in Linhares, Esp-rito Santo, the first time worldwide that a part of the ocean was granted legal rights). In this context, the project team will map kin-centric understandings of rivers among RoN movement members and riverine communities; explore historical riverkinship ideas to illustrate the loss of riverine communities’ river rights and identities over time; and develop a kin-centric rights framework to support activists and policymakers in implementing and enforcing river rights in the future.

CGD Working Paper Series

Dyer, C., Sanchez, E., and Treki, W. 2025. [Leave No-One Behind in Education: Terms of schooling inclusion for Tuareg communities in Libya and child miners in Bolivia.](#)

This paper examines the dialectic of persistent poverty and conditionalities of the formal schooling system in the context of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda pledge to 'Leave No-One Behind' (LNOB). It argues that conditional access to formal schooling and the rigid structures of state education systems contribute to the persistence of inequality and poverty in communities facing historical and socio-economic marginalization. It takes case studies of child miners in Bolivia and the Tuareg in Libya to examine the 'terms of schooling inclusion' (ToSI) that they experience. The paper expands the original ToSI framework's focus on schooling and structural inequalities to add ontological and epistemological 'terms' that the two cases illustrate. By applying the ToSI lens, the paper challenges the depoliticization of schooling 'inclusion' and points to the persistence of conditionalities that, unless addressed, undermine Agenda 2030's potentially transformative focus on LNOB in education.

Read the [CGD Working Paper Series.](#)

Celebrating MA Student Success

A huge congratulations to our MA Global Development and Education graduates Esme Lea and Megan Green! Esme won the Master's Outstanding Contribution Prize, and Megan won both the Master's Politics and International Studies Dissertation Prize and the Master's Politics and International Studies Prize.

Megan's dissertation, supervised by Professor Caroline Dyer, achieved a mark of 91 and was entitled, ['We're a School of Sanctuary and what that means is, we could have a refugee family tomorrow, we would welcome them, we would treat them as equal'](#). The marker, Dr Lata Narayanaswamy, commented that the theoretical discussion and its application to the empirical analysis was "really superbly done" and concluded by saying: "You have also restored my faith in people; reading about the ways in which so many educators are working so hard to make Britain a welcoming and safe place for all made me teary. Thank you!". The MA programme was led by Professor Caroline Dyer and Dr Katie Hodgkinson.

PGR Spotlight

POLIS PGR Mel Yan presented at the 11th International Summit on Food, Nutrition and Health in Dundee & St. Andrews in December 2025. His presentation was entitled "Food security and inclusion: Political perspectives from emblematic food sovereign spaces in the Philippines."

CGD Blog Series

- Cho, H. 2025. [Just Energy Transition Partnerships Ahead of COP30.](#)
- Dyer, C., Sanchez, E. and Treki, W. 2025. [Leave No-One Behind in Education: A Collaborative Working Paper.](#)
- Yan, M. 2025. [Advancing inclusive food security through interdisciplinarity and collaboration.](#)

Read the [CGD Blog Series.](#)

RiDNet Conversations



The Researchers in Development Network (RiDNet) has launched a new workshop series! RiDNet Conversations complements the existing training support provided by the CGD by offering a platform for PhD students and post-docs working on development issues across the University of Leeds to connect and exchange insights from their research journeys.

The first conversation, “Adapting Research Design: Dealing with the Unexpected in the Field”, took place on 27 November 2025. It aimed at sharing experiences of putting research designs into practice and overcoming challenges in the field. The event featured thought-provoking contributions from two PGR speakers, Alisha Ault (School of Earth and Environment) and Aditya Mehta (POLIS), based on their own experiences, which sparked a stimulating discussion among PGRs from different schools and at various stages in their research.

Further events will be organised the coming months.

CGD Events

Research Seminar | The Dynamics of School Inclusion, Exclusion and Formal Education: Perspectives from the Global South

On 8 October 2025, the CGD co-hosted a seminar with the Inclusion, Childhood and Youth Research Centre (ICY), with presentations by [Prof Caroline Dyer](#) (POLIS, University of Leeds) and [Dr Daniel Kyereko](#) (Department of Education, University of York).

Online Book Launch | Pharmaceutical Knowledge Commons for the Most Neglected Populations in Global Health

On 5 December, the CGD was delighted to host the online launch of the latest book by [Dr Markus Fraundorfer](#) (POLIS, University of Leeds). As well as a presentation from the author, the event featured contributions from four distinguished academic and professional experts on global health politics, global justice, neglected tropical diseases, and DNDi.

Food, Development and Society PGR-ECR Network Quarterly Hangout

On 8 December, the CGD co-hosted the Quarterly Hangout of the Food, Development and Society PGR-ECR Network alongside the Social Policy Association (SPA). The Network brings together [PhD students navigating the interdisciplinary themes of food, development, and society](#).

Invitations to future CGD events will be shared by email. For more details about CGD events, contact us at cgd@leeds.ac.uk or check our [website](#).

A Final Note

Call for Submissions

We invite submissions to the **CGD Blog Series** in the form of short opinion pieces or blogs (max. 800 words). Contributions can be based on published or ongoing research as well as thematic pieces on development issues and practice. Submissions from **students** are encouraged.

We also welcome full paper submissions as part of the popular **CGD Working Paper Series**. Read our working paper submission guidelines [here](#).

Finally, we invite submissions for our next **CGD Newsletter**. Newsletter items can include, but are not limited to, updates on recent publications, research activities, funding bids and capture, conference activities, teaching activities and awards, public engagement and impact activities.

Submissions will be published on the CGD website and promoted on our social media channels. Please send all submissions to **cgd@leeds.ac.uk**.

We wish you an enjoyable semester!

About the Centre for Global Development

The CGD promotes research that enhances the visibility of global development challenges. The Centre believes that addressing global challenges requires an explicit connection between development theory and practice. Our work is organised around two main themes:

- *Politics of Global Development*: A significant focus of our work is on the politics of doing global development.
- *Critical Development Theory*: This work is rooted in a long history of critical development studies and the political economy of development. We are no longer specifically focused on 'developing' countries or the 'Global South'. The interconnected challenges of poverty, inequality and climate change demand global understandings.

Thank you for reading!
CGD Team



UNIVERSITY OF LEEDS

**CENTRE FOR GLOBAL
DEVELOPMENT**

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
SCHOOL OF POLITICS AND
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

cgd.leeds.ac.uk

cgd@leeds.ac.uk
