

ANNUAL REPORT 2024



University of Antwerp
IOB | Institute of
Development Policy

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INTRODUCTION

by IOB staff and students

MASTER PROGRAMMES



Facts and figures

ACADEMIC YEAR 2023-2024



#completed applications

470



#accepted students

323



#enrolled students

75

24 # Governance and Development

28 # Development Evaluation and Management

23 # Globalisation and Development



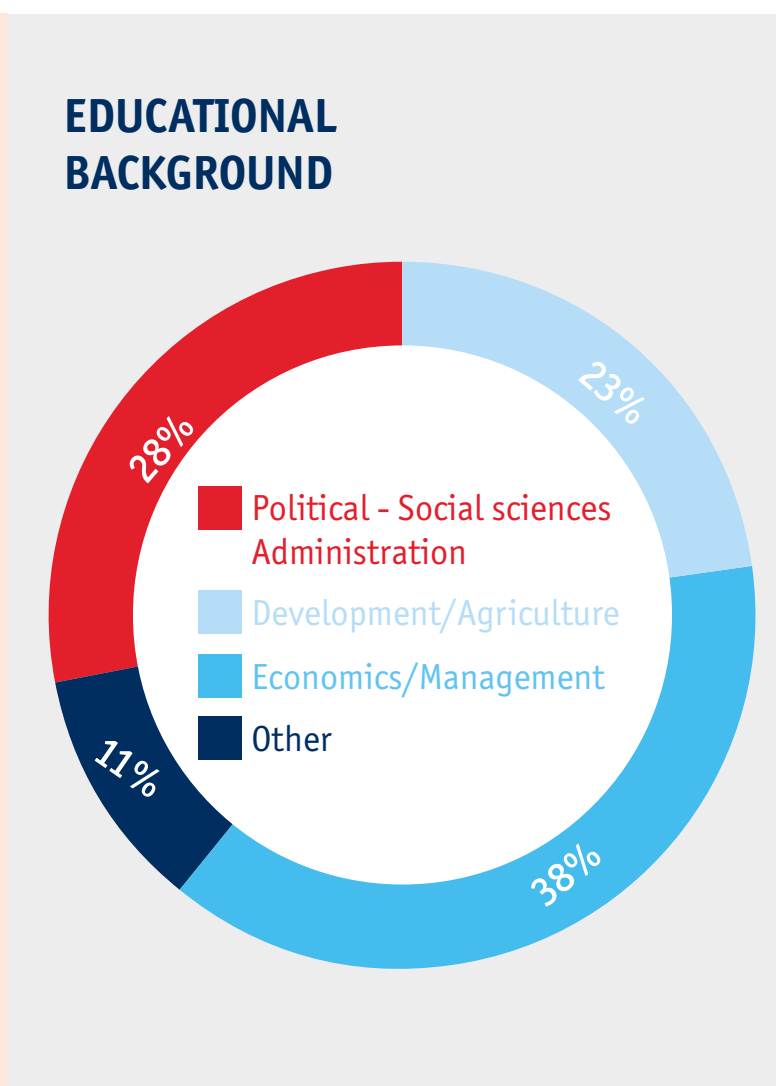
#VLIR-UOS scholarships

28



#different nationalities

28



The Master programmes

The Institute of Development Policy (IOB) offers high-level education in topics such as migration, human rights, conflict, poverty, inequality, globalisation, and climate change.

IOB offers three Advanced Master programmes, each with a high degree of specialisation and a distinct focus:

- 1. Master of Globalisation and Development**
- 2. Master of Governance and Development**
- 3. Master of Development Evaluation and Management**

Within the Master programmes, students can choose from various tracks according to their personal interests and career paths.

In 2018, we started the 'IOB ICP Connect' project, through which we aim to globalise our education, research and societal outreach activities, by forging long-term structural cooperation with Southern

partners and academics.

Our strategy takes the different situations and contexts of our partners into account and is based on the following principles:

- Build on existing cooperation
- Tailor-made step-by-step approach
- Build synergies between teaching, research and service to society

Different instruments are used to cooperate: student and staff mobility, research internships, dissertation mobility, offering of joint modules, among other activities.

The ICP Connect programme enables us to 'globalise' and 'decolonise' our Master education - addressing the critique of too few (critical) 'voices from the South'. ■



GLOBALISATION AND DEVELOPMENT

- Aims to understand the complex dynamics of globalisation and its impact on development.
- Focuses on issues such as climate crisis, migration, inequality, and poverty.

[Learn more](#)

GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

- Explores governance's role in conflict resolution, peace-building, and sustainable development.
- Offers insights into global development debates and governance challenges.

[Learn more](#)



A few **key features** of the Master programmes are their modular structure, their policy-oriented and research-driven character and their focus on student-oriented learning. ■

policy-oriented

research-driven

student-centred

Education at IOB incorporates the latest social-scientific insights relevant to the development challenge. Students learn from each other's experiences and from their exposure to living and studying in the North. We use various teaching methods to stimulate student-centred learning, including traditional lectures, individual and group assignments, discussions, literature reviews, case study analyses, action labs and simulation games. ■



DEVELOPMENT EVALUATION AND MANAGEMENT

- Designed for current or aspiring M&E practitioners and researchers.
- Provides theoretical knowledge complemented by practical skills in development evaluation and management.

[Learn more](#)

Education at IOB 2024

CBM course Tanzania

This Community Based Monitoring (CBM) course covers the theoretical foundations of CBM, its place within monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks, and the practical steps of organising CBM programmes, including data collection, analysis and use of evidence. Through hands-on participation in the Fuatilia Maji project, students develop skills in fieldwork, data interpretation and dissemination, while exploring the benefits and challenges of community-driven monitoring initiatives. ■

Mobility Window

The Mobility Window offers students the chance to participate in a research stay within an existing project at one of IOB's partner universities in the Global South. This opportunity enables them to:

- Apply their knowledge of research methods in real-world settings.
- Develop valuable intercultural skills.
- Gain hands-on field research experience outside Belgium.

The research stay lasts 5-6 weeks, from mid-November to the Christmas break, wrapping up Module I. ■

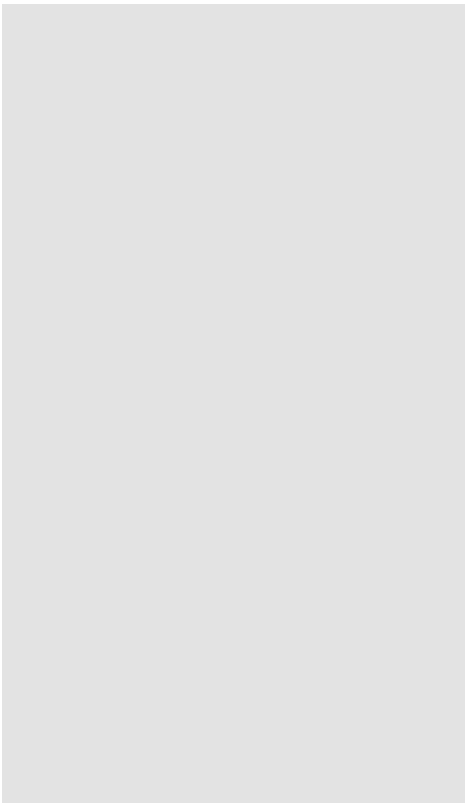
IOB's alumni policy 2024

IOB values lasting connections with its alumni and has developed a robust policy to facilitate networks and collaboration. Through alumni spaces, including a Facebook community, LinkedIn groups, newsletters, and more, IOB fosters engagement. The institute organises various alumni activities, promoting interaction and impact within the development community, including meet-and-greet sessions, alumni in action talks, and impactful award seminars. This strategy not only strengthens alumni bonds but also contributes to South-South cooperation, influencing education, research, and societal services positively.

[Learn more](#)

Network event for IOB students, alumni and staff 2024

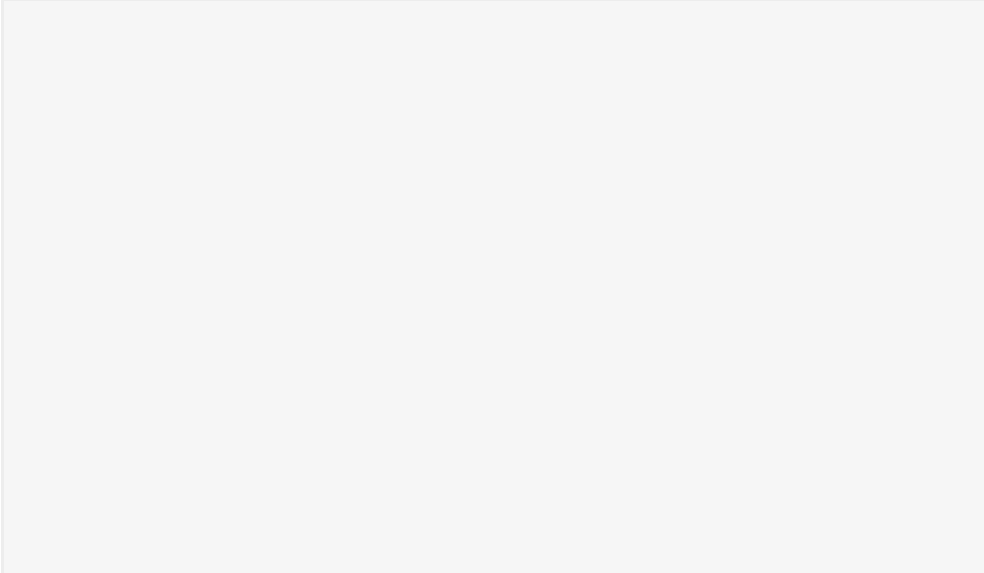
The event brought together the IOB community for an evening of connection, collaboration, and celebration. The diverse turnout of staff, students, and alumni engaged in thought-provoking discussions on a range of topics, creating a vibrant and memorable experience. ■



IOB alumni seminar in Bukavu, DRC

On 20 April, IOB organised an alumni seminar at the Université Catholique de Bukavu (UCB) in Bukavu, DRC. The event provided a platform for in-depth discussions on critical issues, including the challenges and prospects of North-South cooperation.

Participants also shared their professional experiences and gained valuable insights into the study programmes offered by the University of Antwerp. This seminar underlined the IOB's commitment to fostering a global network of engaged alumni and promoting meaningful cooperation. ■



Prizes for Global Research

In line with our emphasis on student-centred learning, we also place an emphasis on the individual research projects and Master dissertations. During the graduation ceremony, three students received the Prize for Global Research from the Province of Antwerp for their excellent dissertations.



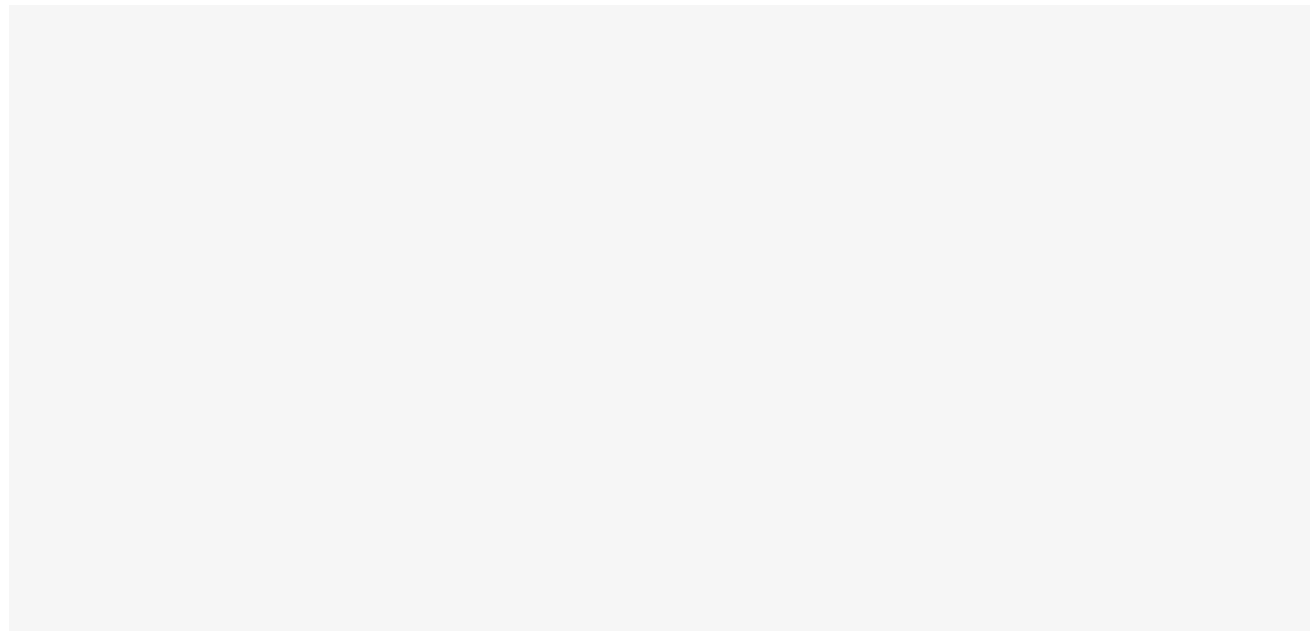
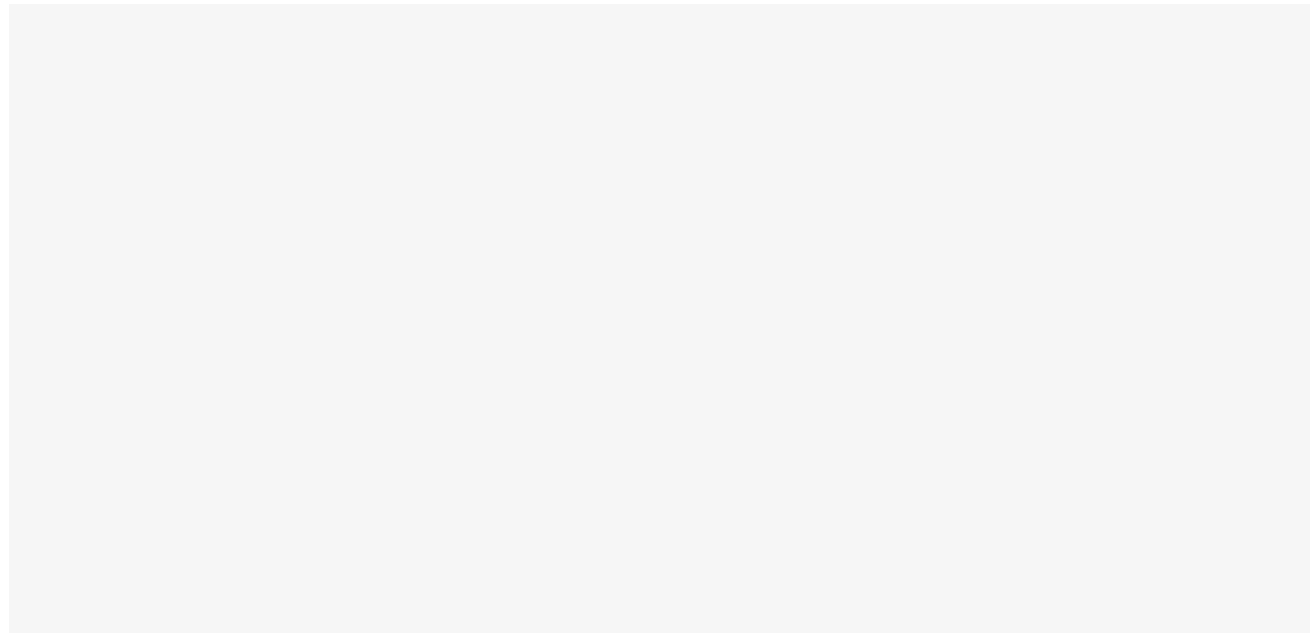
Minh Anh Nguyen
Governance and Development

**“Affirmative Action to Address
Horizontal Education Inequalities: A Case
Study of Vietnam”**

Edison Butar Butar

Development Evaluation
and Management

"United Yet Divided? A Comparative Study
on SOGIESC Equality in 'Leave No One
Behind' UNSDCF"



"Effects of External Capital Inflows on
Structural Change in Developing Countries:
ASEAN-4 Economies"

John Paul Corpus
Globalisation and Development

Debating Development 2024

Harbouring (in)justices? Unveiling the undercurrents of port prosperity in Antwerp and beyond

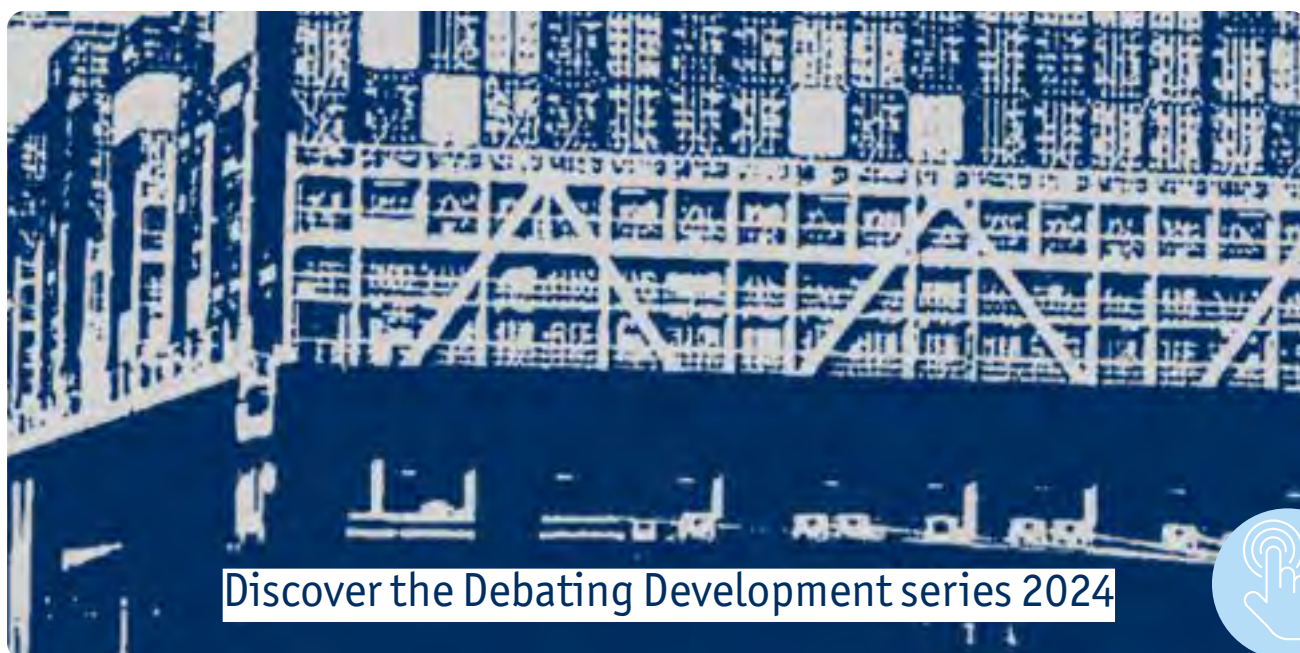
For centuries, the port of Antwerp has been a hub of economic activity and global trade. Today, it remains Europe's second largest port and a symbol of industrial and commercial success. But this prosperity has come with significant hidden costs, including environmental degradation, social injustice and the displacement of vulnerable communities.

The Debating Development series addresses these critical issues, peeling back the layers of port-related progress to reveal its uneven impact. Discussions focus on the socio-environmental challenges affecting marginalised groups and the Global South, while also examining how academic institutions interact with and influence port activities.

Through inclusive dialogue, the series encourages scholars, policy makers and civil society to envision a more equitable and sustainable future. It calls for transformative approaches that prioritise equity and accountability over unbridled economic growth.

Active pluralism in action

Gert Van Hecken creates a “brave space” where diverse perspectives are valued. In his Debating Development course for instance, he invites voices from the Black community to discuss pressing issues like racism. “As educators, sometimes our role is to step aside and listen,” he explains.

[Read blogpost](#)

Discover the Debating Development series 2024





OTHER IOB STAFF TEACHING ACTIVITIES 2023-2024

IOB contributes to teaching at other faculties within the University of Antwerp and with IOB's partners. Several dissertations at other UAntwerp faculties were supervised by IOB staff.

Debating Development

Gert Van Hecken coordinated the Debating Development series for UAntwerp students, supported by the VLIR-UOS Global Minds programme and co-organised with USOS.

Intl. Economics and Intl. Economic Organisations

This course was taught by George Mavrotas in the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Topics in Development Studies

Faculty of Business and Economics and of Social Sciences students could enroll in this course taught by a team of IOB lecturers, coordinated by Marijke Verpoorten.

Politics of International Finance

This course was taught by George Mavrotas within the Faculty of Social Sciences.

Political Economy of Development

Marijke Verpoorten and Olivier Sterck jointly taught this course in the Master of Political Science, Master of International Relations and Diplomacy, and Master of Social and Economic Sciences.

Gender and Development

Nathalie Holvoet taught this course in the interuniversity Master of Gender and Diversity.

Sustainable Development

Kristof Titeca teaches 'Sustainable Development' at UAntwerp's Institute for Environment and Sustainable Development (IMDO) for the Biology Bachelor and Environmental Sciences transition programme.

Several staff members lectured at partner institutes in the South:

- Several courses at the Catholic University of Bukavu (DR Congo):
 - Research design by Tom De Herdt, Pierre Merlet, Sara Geenen, Marie Rose Bashwira, Kamala Kaghoma.
 - Governance of natural resources by Marijke Verpoorten, Pierre Merlet, Bossissi Nkuba, Anuarite Bashizi and Sara Geenen
 - Contributions to the Master en Economie by Pierre Merlet
- Method Course for the project: "Making Refugee Integration Sustainable: In search of durable relations with host populations in Uganda" at Mbarara University (Uganda), by Kristof Titeca, Frank Ahimbisibwe and Ivan Ashaba.
- Community Based Monitoring course (CBM) at Mzumbe University (Tanzania), by Nathalie Holvoet, Sara Dewachter, Doreen Kyando, Solomon Mwije and Rajab Mgonja.

Global Justice

This course was taught by Tomaso Ferrando as part of several Bachelor and Master programmes at the University of Antwerp. Students explored justice in a global context through a lecture series that addressed topics such as positionality, colonialism, climate, and intersectionality. They engaged with human rights, development cooperation,

and technological innovation as potential solutions to global challenges. The course included seven enlightening sessions featuring guest speakers, followed by small-group seminars. Participants examined historical perspectives, climate crises, and societal inequalities in depth.



2024 Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) Seminar

This two-week Evaluation Capacity Development (ECD) seminar, organised by Nathalie Holvoet and Sara Dewachter, and funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation's Special Evaluation Office (SEO),



brought together leading evaluation experts from National Evaluation Societies (VOPEs - Voluntary Organisations for Professionalising Evaluations) in partner countries of Belgian development cooperation. The seminar aimed to strengthen these organisations in their role of developing national M&E capacities and promoting the use of evaluation practices. Specifically, it enabled 25 evaluation experts, all members of national evaluation societies, to become key drivers in enhancing their national M&E systems and their respective organizations.

Twenty scholarships, funded by the SEO, are available for evaluation experts from 14 partner countries.

2024 ECD Programme videos

During the training programme, the participants worked together in country teams to conduct a SWOT analysis of:

- their national monitoring&evaluation system
- their national evaluation society (VOPE)

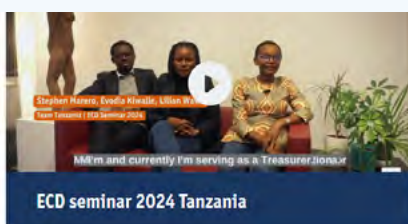
These building blocks were developed through country team work in various workshops throughout the training programme, culminating

in a comprehensive SWOT analysis of both the M&E system and the VOPE, along with a list of future actions to strengthen both.

Based on these analyses, a poster and video were created for each country team. These outputs helped share the results of the ECD training with interested VOPE stakeholders.



ECD seminar 2024 Senegal



ECD seminar 2024 Tanzania



ECD seminar 2024 Uganda



ECD seminar 2024 DR Congo



ECD seminar 2024 Guinea



ECD seminar 2024 Mali



Education at IOB 2024



1 Study trip to Paris!

IOB students took an enriching academic and cultural trip to Paris, France. A key highlight was a visit to the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), where students engaged in insightful discussions on development issues. The trip also included a visit to the Cité de Développement Durable campus, where students deepened their understanding of sustainable development and exchanged knowledge with peers.

2 End-of-module paper conference

After Modules II and III, students presented their end-of-module papers, a key individual assessment. They submitted a 4,500–5,500-word policy paper on a concrete issue, often linked to personal interests, with guidance from lecturers. Students then presented their findings in a 15-minute conference-style presentation and provided critical feedback as discussants in a 5-minute response.

3 Dissertation fieldwork

Last summer, several students expanded their research through field visits in multiple countries. These hands-on opportunities enriched their theses with real-world insights. By engaging with communities and stakeholders, the students gained valuable perspectives on global challenges.

RESEARCH AND OUTREACH



The Institute's annual activities in Research and Outreach continue to be diverse and dynamic. Guided by our commitment to creating a just and sustainable world, we work across multiple geographical regions and employ interdisciplinary approaches to tackle complex, often politically sensitive policy challenges. Our outreach has evolved beyond traditional policy briefs and opinion pieces to embrace innovative collaborations with artists and various stakeholders. These partnerships have produced unique outputs including photo-books and comics, while also emphasizing citizen-science and action-research initiatives. To learn more about our work, please explore our social media channels and research website, where you'll find additional projects and activities.

A word on the new Research & Outreach strategy

This year, we released our new Research and Outreach Strategy for 2024-2029, charting our course for the future. The strategy was re-written on the basis of a series of collective discussions and informed by a benchmark study comparing IOB to some of its European peer development institutes. Our central concern is to identify viable alternative development pathways towards a more equitable and sustainable world. We situate this concern in the evolving and diversified field of development studies and we identify different ways in which research interacts with the development processes. Different sections also focus on the ethics of research and principles in constituting partnerships.

[Read the new research & outreach strategy](#)

[Read the benchmark study](#)



Highlights 2024

Research website & publications

Our research page has been integrated into the main IOB website, bringing all our educational and research activities together. Navigate through our pages to discover more about our research strategy, publications, ongoing and past projects and our research staff. ■

[Visit the IOB research website](#)



Project applications

Throughout the year, we received the results of several project calls and were happy to see many projects being accepted; including 2 new VLIR-UOS TEAM projects; 3 FWO projects; 1 FWO predoc fellowship and an FWO seal of excellence; 3 Global Minds Research Scholarships; a Biodiversa+ project; a YUFE4Postdoc fellow; numerous travel grants; etc.

We are awaiting news from many more project and fellowship applications that were submitted this year and which will

hopefully be able to start in 2025.

It would be unfair to present this as being all sunshine and roses, though. In a very competitive context, the success rate of many funders is rarely higher than 20-25%. So congratulations as well to the many strong, interesting, and relevant proposals in which researchers have invested a lot of time writing and planning but that unfortunately did not make the cut. ■

vliruos
sharing minds, changing lives

fwo

 **biodiversa+**
European Biodiversity Partnership

Belgian Science Policy Office

belspo


Young University
for the
Future
of
Europe



**SAVE THE
DATE**



EADI

European Association of Development
Research and Training Institutes

Shaping Sustainable Futures: Global Challenges, (G)local Solutions?

EADI conference | June 2026

IOB is proud to host the EADI General Conference 2026 at the University of Antwerp from 29 June to 02 July 2026, in a hybrid format.

As one of the most prominent events in Development Studies, this conference will bring together over 500 researchers, practitioners, and thought leaders from across the globe.

Co-organised with EADI, the event provides a unique space for rigorous debate, networking, and advancing research on critical development challenges. In 2026,

we will tackle the pressing theme: “Shaping Sustainable Futures: Global Challenges, (G) Local Solutions?”

We warmly invite you to save the date and prepare to join us for thought-provoking discussions and collaborative opportunities. Calls for panels and papers will be announced soon—stay tuned!

Join us in Antwerp, in-person or online, as we collectively shape pathways for sustainable futures! ■

[Visit the EADI website](#)

March 2024 | Global Engagement Month

IOB staff participated in several events that were organised as part of the Global Engagement Month (March).

Screening Cobalt Rush

USOS screened the award-winning documentary *Cobalt Rush*, directed by Bossissi Nkuba and Roy Maconachie of the University of Bath. The screening was followed by a panel discussion on Europe's relation with critical raw materials, with MEP Sara Mathieu and researchers Guillaume de Brier, Sarah Katz-Lavigne and Sara Geenen. ■



Local learning, global impact

At UAntwerp's Global Engagement Conference – Local Learning, Global Impact – Pierre Merlet delivered a presentation on “The Slow Journey to Transform Education in Development Studies,” while Kristof Titeca contributed as a member of the Academic Committee on Global Engagement.

The conference also celebrated the awarding of the Paul Panda Farnana Prize to the UCA/Nitlapan partnership, a long-standing collaboration between UAntwerp and the Universidad Centroamericana (UCA), which has been active since 1988. ■



**More about the prize
and partnership**

Town hall event

A 'town hall' event was also organised by Team Diversity and Inclusion on the topic of ethnic-cultural diversity & inclusion for UAntwerp's students and staff. The aim was to inform and raise awareness about the university's diversity and inclusion policy; to offer them the opportunity to discuss success stories and concerns through round table discussions and a panel debate with policymakers; and to formulate recommendations to take targeted actions to promote ethno-cultural inclusion and global engagement. The day started with a

presentation of selected student groups who followed the Debating Development series in which they provided inspiration to 're-think' the university. ■



Gaza - insights & advocacy



This year, we published some pieces shedding light on the situation in Gaza, examining its complex humanitarian, political, and social dimensions.

- [What sparked the 44-day occupation at UAntwerp's Agora building?](#) – A heartfelt reflection by students on their experiences and perspectives regarding the humanitarian challenges in Gaza, offering a glimpse into the lived realities of those affected.
- ['Democratie en ethisch leiderschap? Ondanks maandenlang protest blijft UAntwerpen zich verschuilen achter bureaucratie en vage excuses' \(Dutch](#)

article) – A thought-provoking analysis of the geopolitical dimensions of the crisis, exploring how policy decisions shape the region's prospects for peace.

- [In an open letter](#), more than 6,600 signatories (including many IOB colleagues) urge Belgian universities to cut ties with Israel. Among them are prominent figures like outgoing Deputy Prime Minister Petra De Sutter (Groen), climate activist Greta Thunberg, and filmmaker Ken Loach. "Business as usual' amounts to complicity in one of the greatest violations of international law in our time," the letter states. Gert Van Hecken (IOB) provides further explanation [in this interview](#). ■

State Formation and Resilient Societies

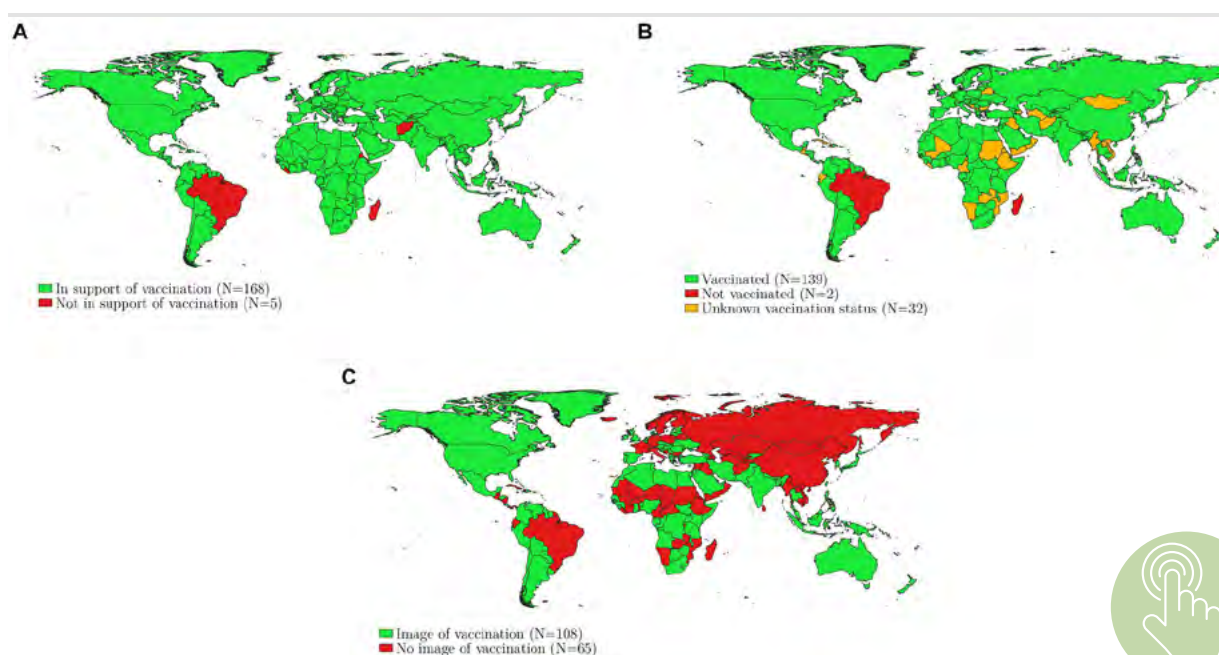
Under this research line, we examine situations and processes of state underreach (fragile or failed states), state reach (developmental states) or state overreach (such as in state crime or structural violence). We aim to understand how state attributes such as government, territory, law, nation or power are articulated or not, and how state actions such as legitimization, economic accumulation or security and services take shape. A focus on the changing patterns of tightening and loosening state reach across space and time implies attention to societal resilience. This is the ability of societies to resist, adapt to, or recover from (the consequences of) a lack of state presence and/or performance, sudden man-made or natural shocks or long term social exclusion and adverse incorporation.

Presidents & vaccines



Are presidents good role models for vaccination uptake? A study by IOB colleagues Nik Stoop, Elie Lunanga, Lara Collart and Marijke Verpoorten indicates that this is only the case if they are trusted, and if people get to know about it. When either this trust or their actions

are unavailable, other ambassadors and communication strategies become crucial in motivating and informing the public. This may be especially relevant in fragile states and remote regions. ■





Foreign Influences on Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act

Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act (AHA) mandates severe penalties for LGBTQ individuals, triggering global outrage. Covert foreign influences, notably from American Evangelicals and possibly Russia, shape the law due to past scrutiny and legal risks. Politicians exploit societal homophobia for political gain, despite international condemnation.

Kristof Titeca has published a series of

blog posts on the foreign influences behind Uganda's Anti-Homosexuality Act on Democracy in Africa and Afrique XXI. He has also been invited to testify about it in front of the Belgian Parliament, and wrote related opinion pieces for De Standaard and EU Observer. And he was also interviewed on this topic by several media, such as ARTE, VRT, The Africa Report and The EastAfrican. ■



Book launch | Hosting States and Unsettled Guests

In this book launch, which was organised by IOB and MIGLOBA, authors Dr. Jennifer Riggan and Dr. Amanda Poole presented their book "Hosting states and unsettled guests". As wealthy countries build walls to keep migrants out, countries in the Global South are celebrated for their hospitality towards refugees, this book asks the question: did these policies enable refugees to consider their new country home? ■



Mini-conference Mining the globe

In February, IOB hosted the mini-conference "Mining the Globe: Value, Waste, Labour, and Resistance." It was organised within the framework of the Global Organisation of Production subunit of IOB's Master's programme, with support from the ICP Connect project, and engaged in discussions on topics related to global mining practices, labor, and resistance. Speakers presented their experience from cases in Indonesia, DRC, Nicaragua and Colombia. ■



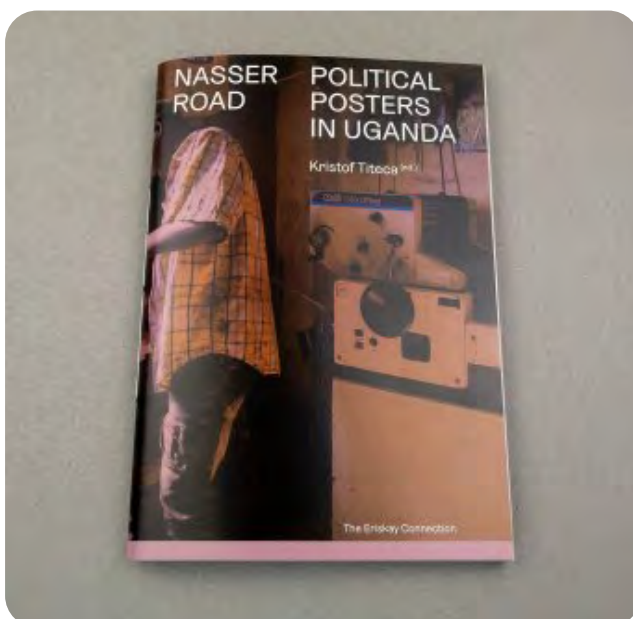
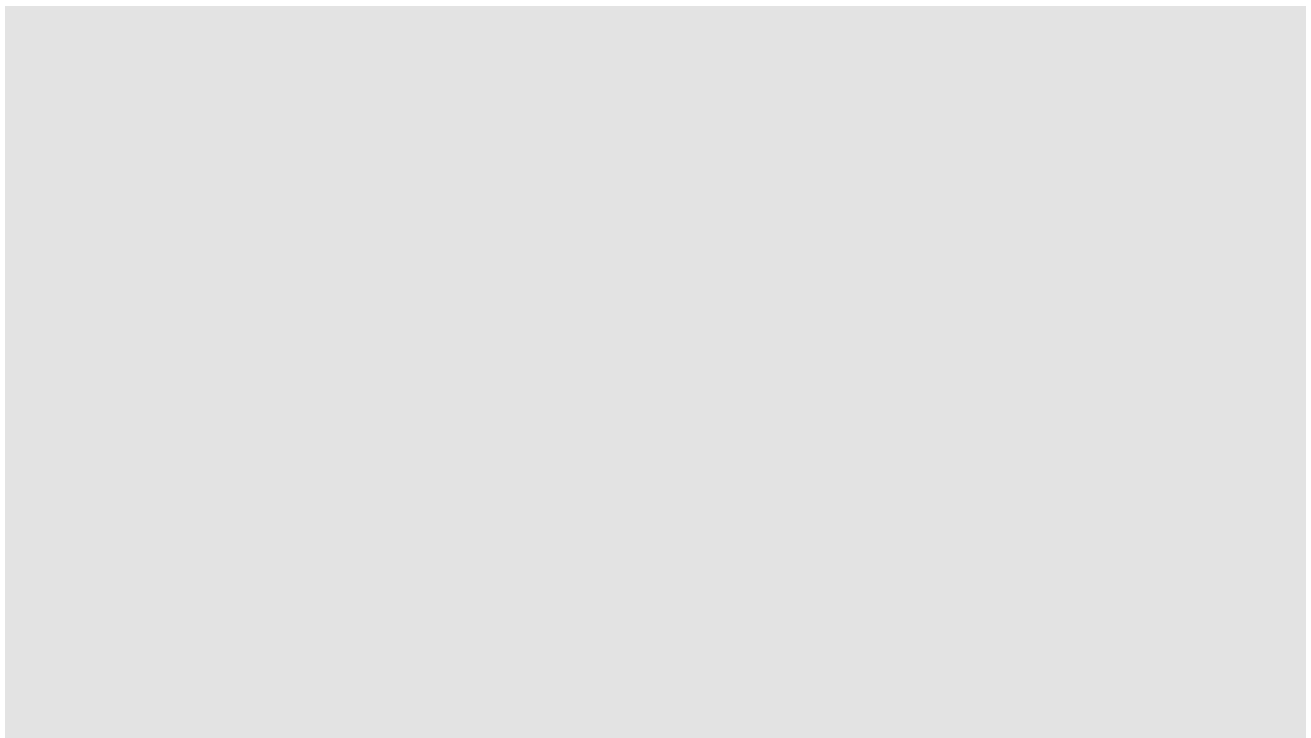


Photo exhibition 'RoboCop in Uganda' and Award for Science Communication

Kampala's Nasser Road is where you can have almost anything printed: from travel documents to political posters. These vibrant images depict controversial leaders as resistance icons, challenging global powers with their Hollywood-inspired aesthetics. After featuring in Kristof Titeca's

photobook Nasser Road, they became the subject of the exhibition "Robocop in Uganda" at the Kunsthal in Rotterdam.

For his work on the photobook and the related exhibition, Kristof Titeca received the Award for Science Communication. ■



Global Governance and Inclusive Development

The limitations of (hyper)globalisation, evident in increasing inequalities and social exclusion, drive our focus on the poorest countries and marginalised individuals. Rather than portraying them as victims, our research studies small-scale producers and workers navigating local-to-global dynamics, particularly emphasizing women, migrants, children, and people with disabilities as the human faces of the globalisation paradox. While global governance theoretically addresses this paradox, our research highlights the need for a critical examination of the political processes and normativity underlying current global governance and aid structures, emphasizing how policies interact with socio-political dynamics at the local level.

Policy dialogue on Uganda's refugee policy



EXPERT ADVISE

The collaborative outreach efforts undertaken by Roos Derrix and Kristof Titeca with the Egmont Institute and the Humanitarian INGO network in Uganda facilitated the dissemination of research findings concerning power dynamics within Uganda's refugee response framework. These engagements provided a platform for interaction with key policymakers and diplomats, enriching our comprehension

of the evolving role of Uganda as a refugee-hosting nation. Moreover, this dialogue was important in identifying potential solutions to address the persistent challenge of humanitarian underfunding. By fostering a multi-stakeholder exchange, this initiative has helped our understanding of the complex interplay of factors influencing refugee protection and assistance in Uganda. ■



- [Uganda: A Model for Refugee-Hosting?](#)
- [The End of Uganda's Refugee Model, or Just a 'Transition'?](#)

Social Protection and Inclusive Growth



EXPERT ADVISE



SOUTH COOPERATION

SPRING (Social Protection and Inclusive Growth) is a consortium of academic institutions from Belgium, DR Congo, Uganda, and Rwanda; which IOB will be coordinating for the next 4 years. The consortium supports Belgium's international cooperation efforts on vital topics such as decent work, social protection, universal health coverage, and the informal economy.

Visit their new website to find out about their work, and make sure to register to their newsletter to stay up to date. ■





« Qui décide » - an illustrated booklet for outreach on responsible mining

Based on findings from the FWO Driving Change project, and in collaboration with the CEGEMI (Université Catholique de Bukavu) and with Lubumbashi based artist Melissa Jina (Ampreinte), Sarah Katz-Lavigne and Sara Geenen have

developed the illustrated booklet Qui décide? In June 2024 some members of the research teams travelled back to the mining sites in Lualaba and South Kivu, in order to discuss the findings and present the outreach booklet. ■



Jobs and violence: evidence from a policy experiment in DR Congo

IOB colleagues Marijke Verpoorten and Nik Stoop published an IOB Analysis and Policy Brief on the question “Can job creation help decrease violence in conflict-affected regions?” Their work examines the impact of a labour-intensive construction programme (the building of three hydropower stations) in North-Kivu, DRC, on reducing violence. The findings reveal a 93% decrease in monthly conflict events in chiefdoms where the programme was implemented. ■



Prosperity gap – a new measure adopted by the World Bank

Since 2013, the World Bank has focused on two main goals: (1) ending extreme poverty and (2) promoting shared prosperity. Shared Prosperity was initially measured by the income growth of the bottom 40%, but this approach was criticised for neglecting the poorest. IOB professor Olivier Sterck, in collaboration with co-authors from the World Bank, addresses this through the development of a new measure – the Prosperity Gap. This measure has been adopted by the World Bank as their new measure of Shared Prosperity.

The Prosperity Gap measures how much each person's income must increase to reach a standard of \$25 per day. This

method better emphasises the needs of the poorest populations. This shift will influence how the World Bank sets its priorities and allocates resources. The new focus on the Prosperity Gap marks a significant step towards addressing global poverty more effectively and inclusively. ■



- [Poverty without poverty line \(CSAE Working Paper\)](#)
- [A new distribution sensitive index for measuring welfare, poverty, and inequality.](#)
- [Prosperity Gap Dashboard](#)

Refugee debt and livelihoods in northern Kenya



Humanitarian aid emphasises refugee self-reliance, yet economic shocks hinder this. Refugees lack stable jobs, savings, or assets, and informal safety nets are weak amid mass displacement. Borrowing becomes their main survival tactic. This report for the World Food Programme, co-authored

by Olivier Sterck, explores debt's role among refugees in Kakuma camp and Kalobeyei settlement, hosting over 270,000 refugees. ■

[Read the full report](#)

AIPRIL seminars



In 2024, IOB continued its collaboration with UAntwerp's Centre for Social Policy Herman Deleeck and the Centre for Urban History through the AIPRIL centre of excellence. AIPRIL (which stands for the Antwerp Interdisciplinary Platform for Research into Inequality) brings together an interdisciplinary team and once again organised a series of seminars, which features IOB researchers such as Adriana Oliveres Mallol, Richard Toppo, Sara Geenen and Divin-Luc Bikubanya. ■



Environment and Sustainable Development

The intertwining issues of environmental/climate change and poverty/inequality have become increasingly central on the international policy agenda, giving rise to heated debates on multi-level governance structures. The urgency of these challenges adds to the complexity, with sustainable development now framed within the intricate context of a 'green economy,' relying on market-based conservation mechanisms and conditional finance instruments. Our research delves into the dynamics and interactions at global, national, and local levels, where actors and policies grapple with the complexities of tackling climate change and ensuring the provision of global public goods, all within the context of socio-political struggles and unequal access to natural resources.

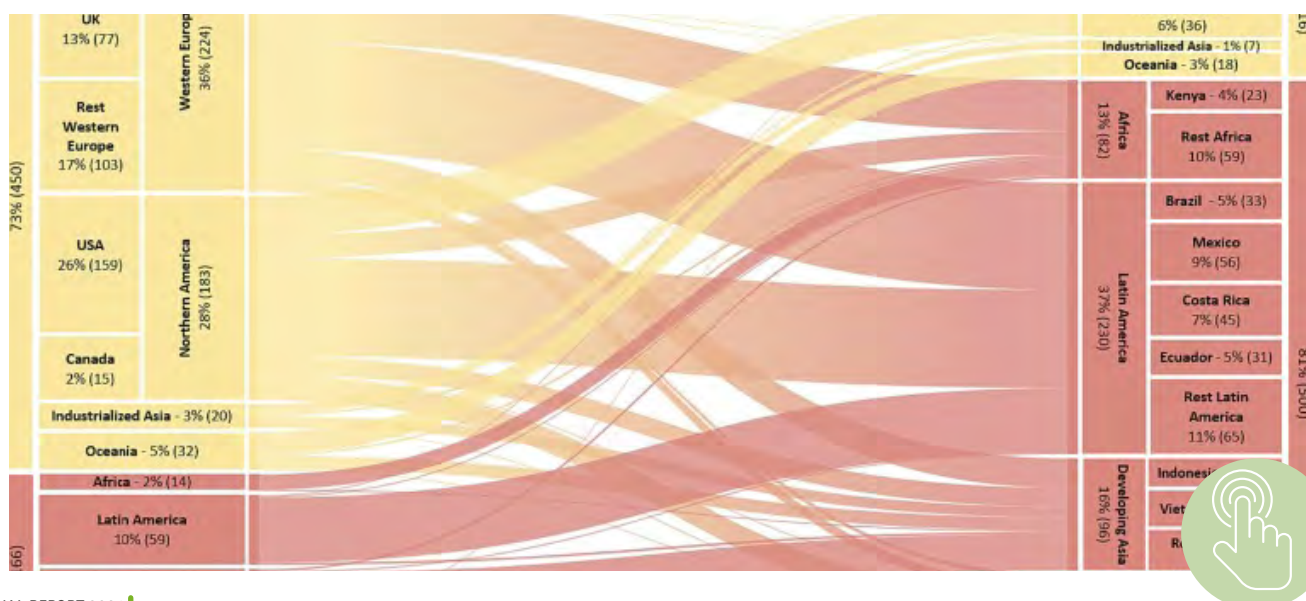


ePEStemology – piercing the bubble of PES success

Over the past 4 years, a group of researchers including Vijay Kolinjivadi, Pierre Merlet, Valensiya Dresvyannikova and Gert Van Hecken have been compiling and analysing the “ePEStemology” database, the largest compilation of studies of Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES) published between 2005 and 2019. The database encompasses 1,067 articles and explores evolving geographical and temporal trends in research objectives, thematic focus, methodologies,

recommendations, and concerns in the design and analysis of PES projects. Find out more about the publicly available database and the key messages with regards to PES research as a booming academic industry; the uneven geographies of PES research; and the construction and hyping of success in PES studies.■

[Visit the project webpage](#)





Life in Bukavu's construction supply chain

The VLIR TEAM project From handmade gravel to handmade urbanism published a photo essay and a series of 6 working papers, co-authored by different team members from various disciplines and backgrounds.

Robert Carrubba is a photographer and filmmaker based in Bukavu, DRC. He visually documented the men, women and children working in the supply chain of gravel, sand, bricks and cement

around Bukavu. The text is written by Lilian Nabintu Kabagale, Divin-Luc Bikubanya and Sara Geenen.

Financial support was given by VLIR-UOS and by USOS, the University Foundation for Development Cooperation at the University of Antwerp; and the project is in partnership with the CEGEMI of the Université Catholique de Bukavu.■

[Read the working paper series](#)

Dans des carrières éloignées de la route, cette image illustre le rôle vital des porteurs. Ces personnes robustes transportent de lourdes pierres depuis les carrières jusqu'à la route principale, en naviguant sur des terrains difficiles. Le ballot de paille ou le tissu enveloppé, appelé ngata, protège la tête du porteur contre les blessures tout en lui permettant de porter la charge en sécurité.



Environmental Policies Instruments across Commodity Chains (EPICC)

On the EPICC project, a large team of researchers from universities from Europe, Brazil and Indonesia has been compairing multi-level governance for biodiversity protection and climate action across different geographies and commodity chains. Make sure to have a look at their website to learn about the impacts and networks of global extraction by delving into their publications and outcomes. These include for instance a policy brief on the EU Regulation on Deforestation-Free Products seen from 'the ground'; a blog

post on a stakeholder roundtable they organised; and a fascinating article on "The 'greening' of Empire: the European Green Deal as the EU first agenda".■



[Read the policy brief](#)

[Publication on Green New Deal](#)

[IOB Blog post](#)





Appointment to UN Panel of experts for Resilient Food Systems Report

Tomaso Ferrando has been selected to join the High Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition (HLPE-FSN) of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) for the report “Building resilient food systems”, expected at the 53rd Plenary Session of the CFS in October 2025.

Selected through a rigorous process emphasizing scientific and technical expertise, alongside regional insights, the team embodies interdisciplinarity.

Their collective experience spans health and nutrition, human rights, gender analysis, Indigenous Peoples knowledge, environmental sciences, and more, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of agricultural and food system vulnerabilities.■



Indigenous peoples and conservation in the DRC

Through research projects funded by VLIR-UOS and CIFOR-RESSAC, and in collaboration with several partners such as the University of Kisangani (UNIKIS) and the DRC National Institute of the Study of Agricultural Research (INEAR), Fergus Simpson and Kristof Titeca contribute to developing a biocultural paradigm – one that links biological and cultural systems – for conservation research and policy in the DRC’s rainforest. It involves extensive fieldwork in three protected areas in the DRC, including Kahuzi-Biega National Park, Yangambi Biosphere Reserve, and the Okapi Wildlife Reserve.

In a World Development article, they explore how policy narratives often label the Batwa people as either ‘forest guardians’ or ‘forest destroyers’ in the context of Kahuzi-Biega National

Park. They call for situation the Batwa’s agency in a more complex political economy of extraction. Their findings have already received significant coverage in international media—links below! ■



- [E360: “Fortress Conservation: Can a Congo Tribe Return to Its Forest?”](#)
- [FAZ: “Die schlechte Nachricht: Wir verlieren den Kampf gegen Wilderei”](#)
- [Mongabay: “‘Historic’ decision for the Batwa & DRC gorilla park faces hurdles — and hope”](#)
- [Article in World Development](#)

VLIRUOS TEAM Project – Greenlake



The new VLIR-UOS-funded GreenLake project co-creates a research-practice platform (RPP) and innovative actionable research to enhance the sustainable development of Floating and Flood-Prone (FFP) villages in Benin, with lessons for West-Africa and beyond.

The RPP 'OVILAC', short for 'Observatoire des villages lacustres', is embedded in the [University of Abomey-Calavi \(UAC\)](#) and seeks to stimulate collaboration between researchers and practitioners. Within the time frame of the GreenLake project (2024–2029), OVILAC co-creates

research on the design, adoption, and impact of Toilet Linked Biogas Plants (TLBPs). The TLBP will reduce open defecation and wood fuel use, thereby leading to knock-on effects on water quality, waterborne and respiratory diseases, the fishery stock, food security and deforestation.

Many partners are involved, including researchers from IOB, UGent and UAC; Biogaz Bénin; NGO Join for Water and the inhabitants of the village of Ahomey-Gblon and Benin's Directorate of Statistics. ■



Digitalisation and informational citizenship

Nearly two years since its inception, the InfoCitizen Project (ERC Starting Grant with PI Moisés Kopper) has pursued its ambitious mission to combine archival, digital, audiovisual, and ethnographic methods in examining how grassroots organisations in marginalised contexts navigate and negotiate their sociocultural and political-economic citizenship through their interaction with data.

The Infocitizen research team

Over this period, the InfoCitizen research team has grown to include four PhD students—Alina Kiel, Berta Fernández Nuez, Guilherme Queiroz Alves, and Thaís Gonçalves Cruz—along with two postdocs, Daniela Linkevicius de Andrade and Aluizio Marino. The team also draws on the

expertise of Bryan Giemza, a Fulbright scholar, Alexandre de Paiva Rio Carmargo, a Scholar in Residence, and Moisés Kopper, the project's Principal Investigator. ■

[Check out the team profiles](#)

Memoranda of Understanding

On November 28, 2024, InfoCitizen expanded its collaboration in Brazil during the Belgian Mission to Brazil. Two memoranda of understanding (MOUs) were signed between IOB, led by UAntwerp's Vice-Rector Nathalie Dens, and InfoCitizen's key partners, [Redes da Maré](#) and the [Group for the Study of New Illegalisms \(GENI\)](#). The ceremony underscored a strong commitment to advancing research and practice at the intersection of data, citizenship, and social transformation. ■



Infocitizen Workshops

In 2024, the project successfully organized three workshops: an audio-visual workshop at the start of 2024, which introduced innovative approaches to audiovisual methods, a methods workshop in May, aimed at charting a roadmap for the individual research activities across our diverse field sites; and a data visualisation

workshop, situated in the ethno-racial contexts of Portugal and Brazil, to close the year. During the final workshop, the team collaboratively explored ethical, unconventional and meaningful ways to represent their collected data for a multifaceted audience.■



The testimonials of two of our researchers, Berta and Alina, who have been immersed in the field for several months, offer valuable insights into how the communities in their respective field sites interact with and apply data in their daily lives.



Watch Berta's video



ACCOMPANYING BLOGPOSTS

- [From an act of citizenship to an act of datafication by Alina Kiel](#)
- [The Interjected everyday: Doing data for development in Kakuma and Kalobeyei settlements by Berta Fernández Nuez](#)

Follow InfoCitizen on LinkedIn and Twitter (X); check out their fully functional website with a collection of insightful and creative blog stories focusing on datafication. The website also features the quartely newsletter, providing a comprehensive overview of our latest developments and achievements.



[HTTPS://INFOCITIZEN.EU/](https://infocitizen.eu/)

Great Lakes of Africa Centre

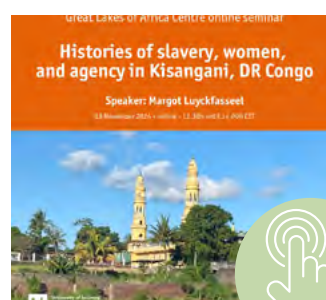
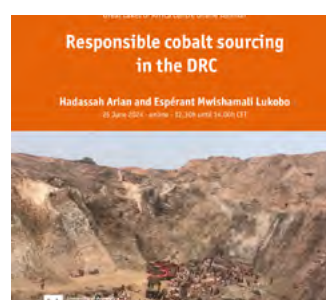
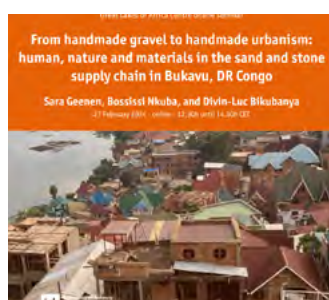
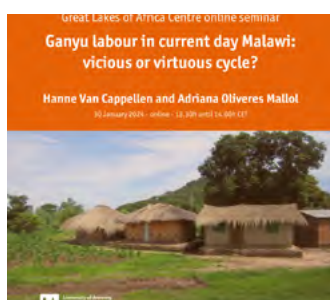
IOB's Great Lakes of Africa Centre (GLAC): giving more visibility to our research on the Central African Great Lakes Region.

The Central African Great Lakes Region stands out as a region of interest for many staff members and other scholars affiliated with IOB, across all research lines. Their work deals with a variety of topics (livelihoods, peace, gender, public services, etc.) and adopts a wide range of disciplinary perspectives. IOB's partnerships with local academic partners in DRC, Uganda, Burundi and Tanzania and the annual publication of our yearbook 'Conjonctures de l'Afrique centrale' also stand witness to IOB's institutional interest in the region.

GLAC seminars

GLAC organises a series of online seminars, helping IOB staff members working on the region to present their work to interested audiences worldwide and thus to reach out to fellow academics and policy circles. ■

[Visit the GLAC website](#)



Conjonctures de l'Afrique centrale 2024

Conjonctures de l'Afrique centrale is the yearly publication of the Belgian Centre for Expertise on Central Africa (CRE-AC), of the Great Lakes of Africa Centre (GLAC) at IOB, the Royal Museum for Central Africa (MRAC), and of the Catholic University of Louvain (UCL). It offers peer reviewed scientific analyses of contemporary dynamics of political, economic and social life in Central Africa. Each edition is coordinated by a team of editors of IOB, UCL and CRE-AC.

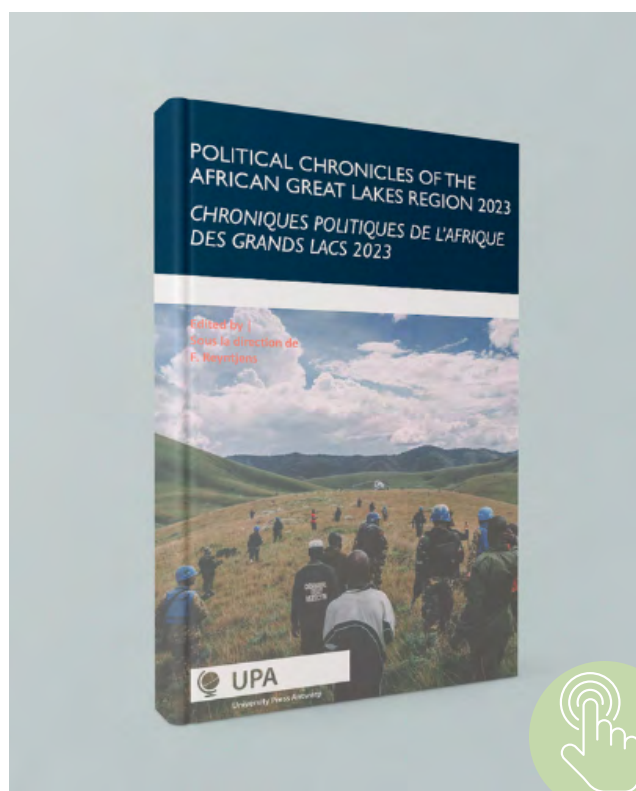
The 2024 edition was edited by Anuarite Bashizi, Astrid Jamar, Denis Augustin Samnick and Vedaste Cituli Alinirhu. It offers an in-depth analysis of the political, economic, social and environmental dynamics shaping the countries of this region, in particular the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi. The book brings together experts and researchers who shed valuable light on the local and international dynamics that influence people's daily lives and the many transformations underway in this region.■



**Previous
editions (open access)**

Political Chronicles 2023

Continuing the tradition of *L'Afrique des grands lacs: Annuaire*, this companion volume to *Conjonctures de l'Afrique centrale* (Paris, L'Harmattan), offers a survey of political developments in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Uganda over the course of 2023. The Political Chronicles are available as a free, open access download from the IOB website ■

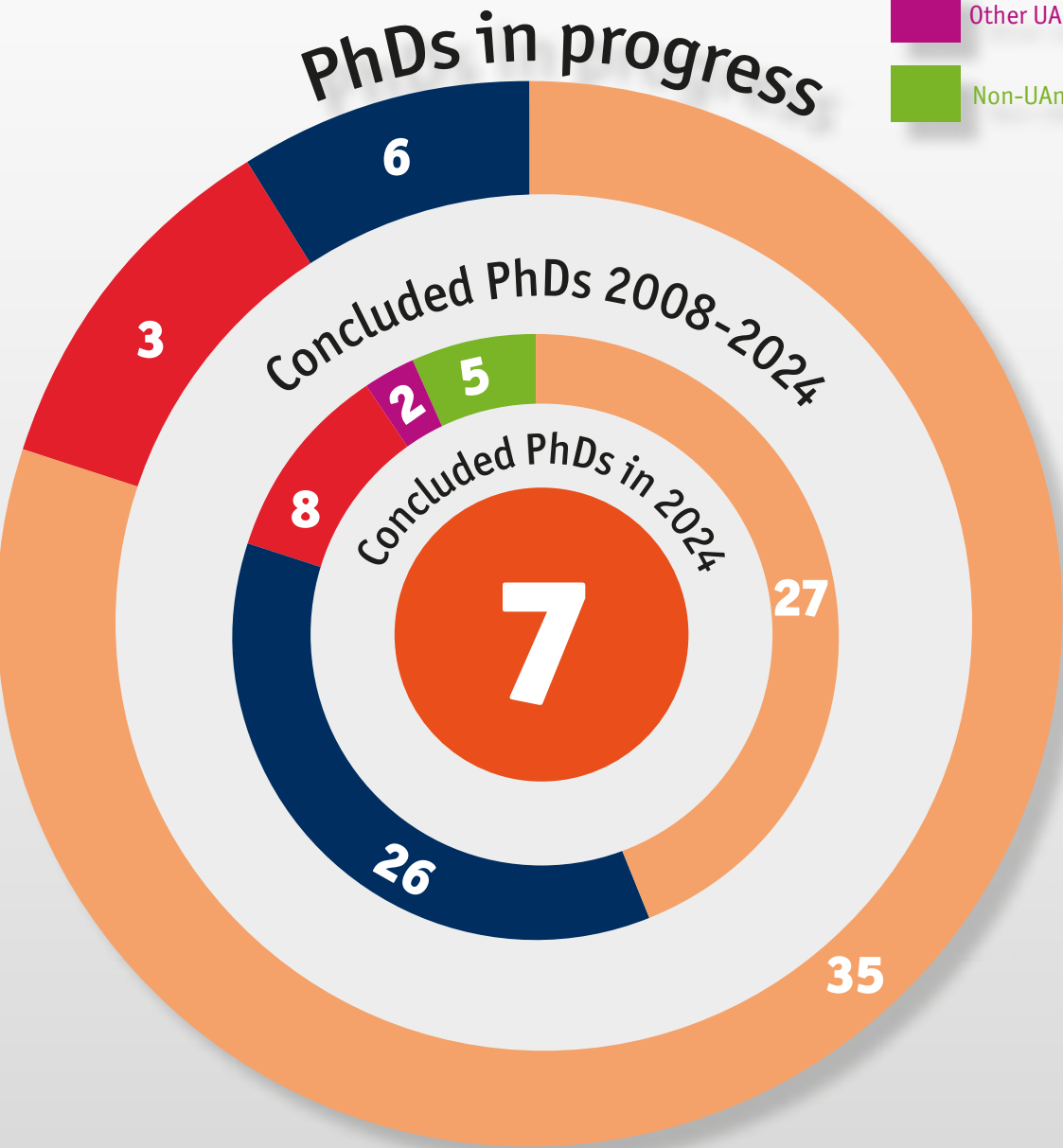


Download this book

PhD training at IOB

As part of the Antwerp Doctoral School, IOB offers a multidisciplinary doctoral programme related to its institutional research agenda which leads to a PhD in Development Studies. The institute also cooperates with its sister faculties of Business and Economics and Social Sciences for disciplinary PhDs on development issues.

CONCLUDED PHDS 2008-24 (INNER CIRCLES)
AND PHDS IN PROGRESS (OUTER CIRCLE)



Defended IOB PhDs in 2024

Investigating the potentiality of community-based mobile monitoring for household water management practices and public water services in rural Tanzania
A multi-method analysis

Doreen Kyando

Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Nathalie Holvoet
Dr. Christella Shitima
Dr. Sara Dewachter



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Unpacking intragovernmental coordination
An interdisciplinary exploration to advance the multisectoral approach to universal health coverage in Uganda

Aloysius Ssenyonjo

Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Kristof Titeca
Dr. Sara Van Belle
Prof. Dr. Bart Griel
Prof. Dr. Freddie Ssengoba



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INSTITUTE
OF TROPICAL
MEDICINE
ANTWERP

University of Antwerp
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Conservation law enforcement from the colonial past to the present

Examining actors, partnerships and contestations in Uganda's Murchison Falls National Park

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor in
Development Studies at the University of Antwerp

Antwerp, 2024

Ivan Mugenyi Ashaba

Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Kristof Titeca
Dr. Katharina Marijnen

University of Antwerp
IOB | Institute of
Development Policy

Exploring the sustainability of the collective-level effects of cash transfers:
Insights from universal unconditional CT programs in rural Western Uganda

Filippo Grisolia

Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Nathalie Holvoet
Dr. Sara Dewachter



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Urban aspirations, rural realities
Navigating labour dynamics in Malawi and Tanzania

Hanne Van Cappellen
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Joaquin De Weert



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Municipal Green Bonds
Climate finance amidst climate injustices

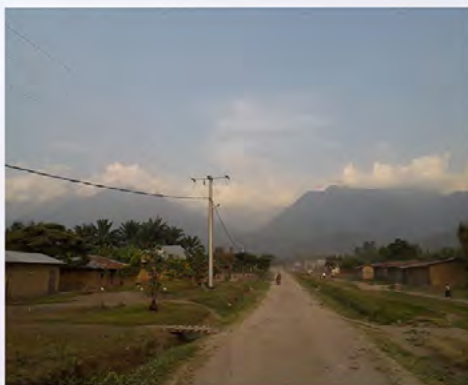
Héctor Herrera
Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Tamaso Fernando



 University of Antwerp
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Development Policy

Learning from micro-economic data. Shocks, opportunities and policies in Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo

Elie Lunanga



Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Marijke Verpoorten | Dr. Nik Stoop

Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Applied Economics
Faculty of Business and Economics | Antwerp, 2024

 University of Antwerp
Faculty of Business
and Economics

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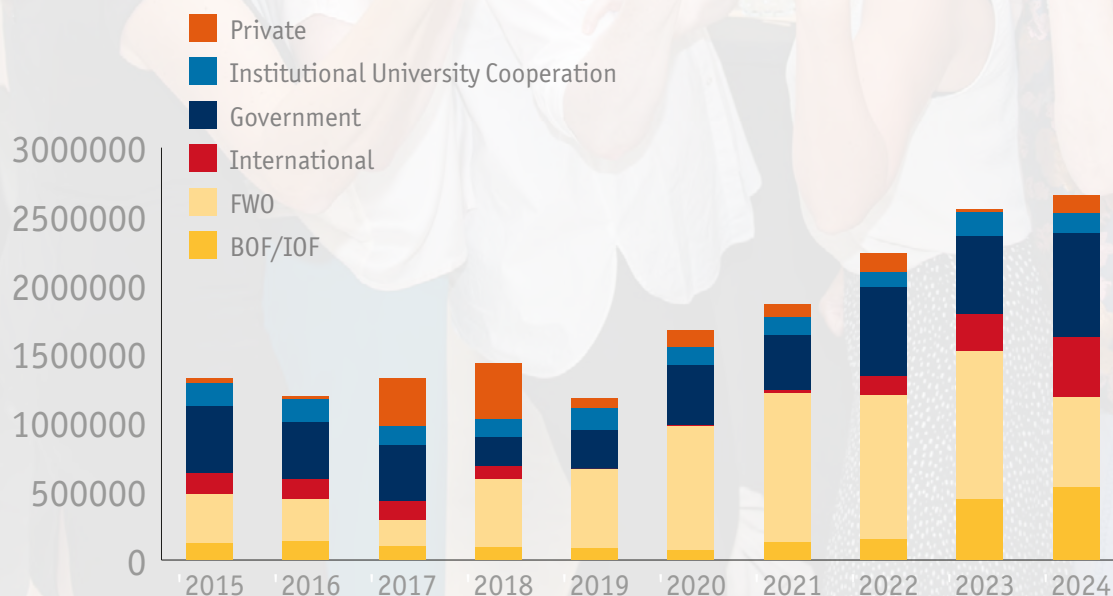
**Visit our website for
ongoing PhD research**

2024 has been a milestone year for IOB PhDs, with 7 candidates successfully defending their theses and earning their doctorates. Their research, spanning topics from climate justice to militarized conservation, reflects a deep commitment to locally embedded scholarship. Read more about their journeys and insights in Exchange to Change.



FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

EVOLUTION OF EXTERNAL FUNDING FOR RESEARCH AND
SERVICE DELIVERY



As external research funding is not integrated in the regular budget, the overview of IOB's financial and budgetary performance addresses the two items separately.

The table below provides an overview of the regular budget outturn for 2024, compared to previous year's results. The basic annual endowment from the Flemish

Government provides the lion's share of the regular budget, and amounted to about €2.6 million euro in 2024. The University of Antwerp structurally adds a fixed matching annual endowment, amounting to €270,000 as of 2024. Other miscellaneous regular income sources add about €237,000 euro. As a result, actual regular 2024 income amounted to about €3.1 million euro, about 20.000 lower than budgeted.

BUDGETARY IMPLEMENTATION IN 2023 AND 2024 (IN EUR)	2023		2024		
	Budgeted	Actual	Budgeted	Actual	%
Income:					
Core funding Flemish Government	2,566,957	2,527,698	2,600,000	2,590,776	99%
UAntwerp funding	220,000	220,000	220,000	270,000	123%
Other miscellaneous income	288,000	215,157	298,000	237,378	75%
o/w exempted payroll taxes	0	0	0	0	0%
scholarship administration fee	60,000	38,979	60,000	0	0%
Total income	3,074,957	2,962,855	3,118,000	3,098,154	99%
Expenditure:					
Personnel costs	2,956,000	2,971,241	2,984,000	3,167,233	106%
Tenured academic staff	1,257,000	1,248,670	1,175,000	1,229,304	105%
Other academic staff	1,094,000	1,116,329	1,186,000	1,282,748	108%
Support staff	604,500	606,242	623,000	655,181	105%
Operating expenses	397,000	420,654	405,000	391,918	97%
Total expenditure	3,353,000	3,391,895	3,389,000	3,559,151	105%
Net result	- 278,043	-429,040	- 271,000	-460.997	

Total realized expenditures amounted to €3.56 million. Of that total, personnel costs represented about €3.2 million in 2024, which was about €170.000 higher than budgeted, while operating expenses added about €392.000, slightly lower than budgeted. Overall, the net budgetary outturn leads to a deficit of about €460.000 in 2024, that was covered using the earmarked institutional reserve funds, which now stand at about €1.25 million at the end of 2024.

Apart from its regular income, IOB also attracts additional income from a broad range of external sources. The

figure on page 40 combines the data on external research funding registered by the University of Antwerp's Research, Innovation & Valorisation department with the research component of IUC projects, where IOB staff participate as project leaders. As the figure highlights, total additional external finance amounted to more than €2.6 million in 2024, an increase of approximately €200,000 compared to 2023. Recent years also show a much more diversified portfolio, with a substantial part coming from Research Foundation-Flanders (FWO) as well as an increasing international component.

PEOPLE AT IOB



As of 1 September 2024, Prof. Nathalie Holvoet has taken up the role of chairperson for our institute. She will be joined by Prof. Sara Geenen (education) and Prof. Kristof Titeca (research). Vicky Verlinden is continuing to support the team as our dedicated institute coordinator. Furthermore, Divin-Luc Bikubanya and Diana Tiholaz have joined the management team as the AAP/BAP representatives.



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Bureau

- Chair IOB: Nathalie Holvoet
- Chair Education Commission: Sara Geenen
- Chair Research Commission: Kristof Titeca
- Representative Research Staff: Diana Tiholaz & Divin-Luc Bikubanya
- Representative Support Staff: Vicky Verlinden

[More about IOB](#)

Professional service staff

- Institute coordinator: Vicky Verlinden
- Research coordinator: Frédéric Huybrechs
- Student office: Greet Annaert & Katleen Van pellicom
- Social service: Greet Annaert
- Alumni and promotion: Sara Dewachter
- Research support: Joëlle Dhondt, Katleen Van pellicom
- PhD support: Katleen Van pellicom
- Financial services: An Vermeesch
- Librarian: Hans De Backer
- Innovation and quality assurance in education: Elfje Godderis
- Communication IOB: Joëlle Dhondt, Frédéric Huybrechs, Jenipher Biira Salamula
- VLIR-UOS University cooperation Burundi: Marjan Vermeiren

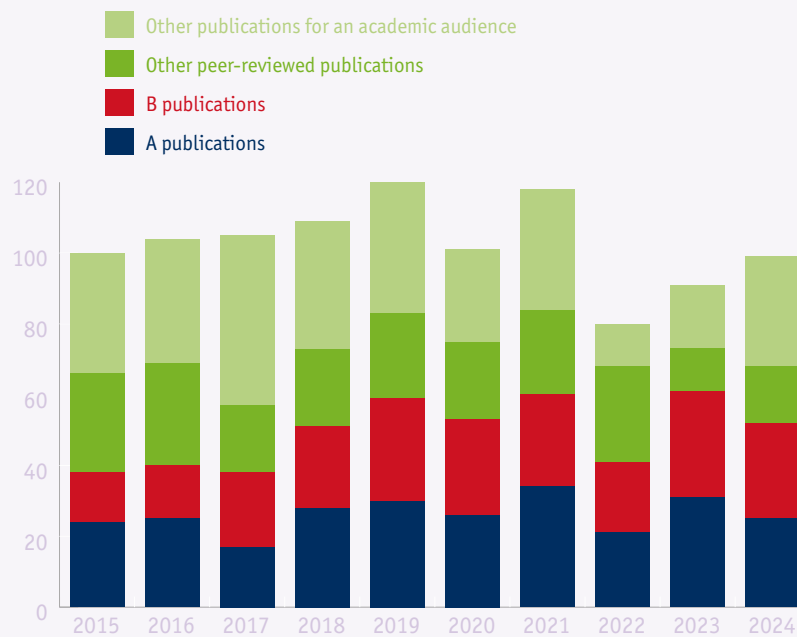
Scientific Advisory Board

- Melissa Leach - Cambridge Conservation Initiative, Cambridge (UK)
- Sam Hickey - Global Development Institute, University of Manchester (UK)
- Kate Meagher – Associate professor, London School of Economics and Political Science
- Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni - Professor, Universität Bayreuth
- Rosalba Icaza Garza - International Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Erasmus University Rotterdam (Netherlands)
- Mateo Porciuncula Añaña - IOB Alumnus, International centre for transnational justice, New York
- Heidy Rombouts - Director General Development Cooperation & Humanitarian Aid (Belgium)

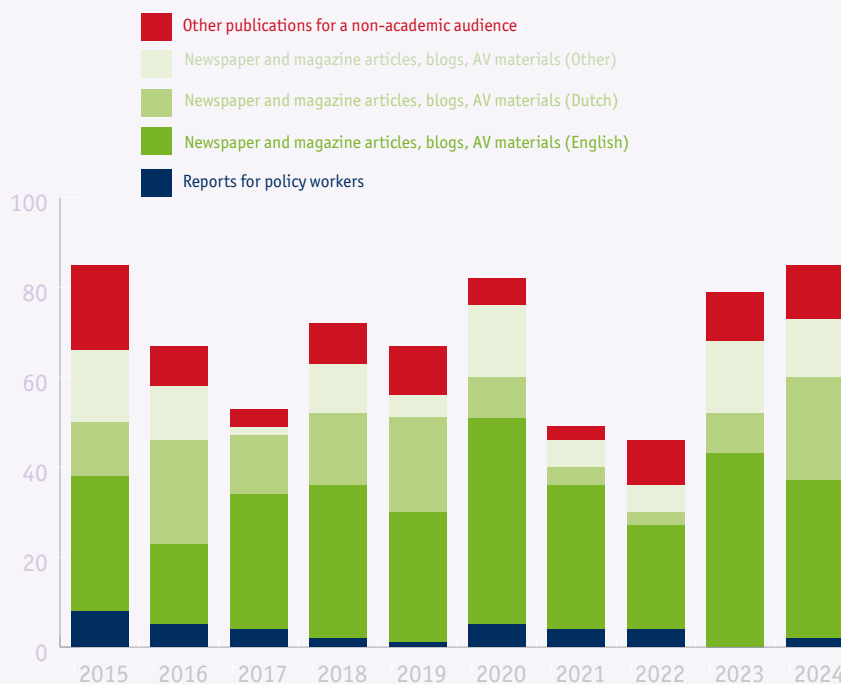
IOB PUBLICATIONS

FIGURE 1: IOB PUBLICATIONS FOR AN ACADEMIC AUDIENCE *

* Data as available in February 2025.
Source: Academic Bibliography
University of Antwerp.



IOB PUBLICATIONS FOR A NON-ACADEMIC AUDIENCE *



IOB publishes a series of open access research: peer-reviewed Discussion Papers, Working Papers and Analyses & Policy Briefs. On our website you will find these publications freely available.

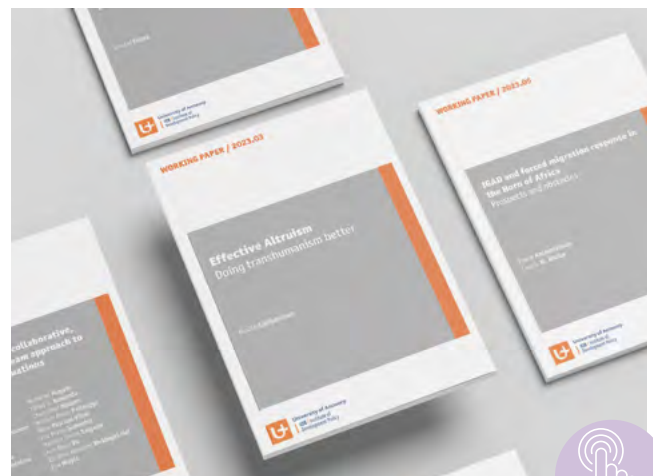
Other open access publications on the IOB website include *Political Chronicles of the African Great Lakes Region* and the archive of the *Yearbook of the Great Lakes Region* (1996 until 2016).

Many of our researchers also offer 'ungated preprints' on their ResearchGate profiles. The University of Antwerp library also makes available author versions of articles if and when allowed.

Finally, IOB researchers often publish on blogs, in newspapers and take part in other media outlets, making their expertise available to a wider audience.



Discussion papers 2024



Working papers 2024



Analysis and policy briefs 2024



Overview all 2024 publications of IOB staff

IOB - University of Antwerp
Lange St.-Annastraat 7
2000 Antwerp

Tel +32 (0)3 265 57 70

e-mail:

iob@uantwerp.be

website:

<https://www.uantwerp.be/iob>

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