The ELLA Network facilitates south-south comparative research and knowledge exchange, to inspire development policies and practices that are grounded in evidence about what works in varied country contexts.
About Us

Our Research

Exchange and Learning

ELLA in Numbers

Our Themes:
  - Sustainable Economic Development
  - Environmental Management
  - Governance and Social Issues

The ELLA Partner Network

Our Community

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ABOUT US

ELLA began in 2010 and has developed into a Network of some twenty partners spanning Latin America, Africa and South Asia. The Network has skills in inter-regional comparative research, and in running exchange and learning programmes, based on that research, across the global south. The aim of the Network is to foster south-south learning that is sensitive to context, so that policymakers and practitioners can adapt knowledge from elsewhere to their own realities.

In the last six years, the research and exchange has centred on economic, social, governance and environmental issues, including work on the extractive industries, rural development, human rights, accountability systems and climate change. The network has produced over 200 research papers and communication materials, and run twelve online exchange and learning communities, directly reaching some 3000 participants.

The research and learning has fed into African and Asian policies as broad as the social licensing of extractive investments, the development of contract farming, the combatting of violence against women, improved citizen oversight of budgets, and the formulation of climate change action plans. Although the funding of the Network has meant that learning to date has been more directed at African and South Asian countries, the Network is organised to facilitate horizontal learning across all regions.
RESEARCH

The ELLA Network conducts inter-regional comparative research that is demand-led and policy relevant, through the synthesis of existing research, as well as original data collection and analysis. The research on each region is carried out by ‘paired’ research centres from that region. The objective is research of a rigorous journal quality standard - papers that can be distilled into journal articles. Our model typically involves four stages:

IDENTIFICATION OF THE TOPIC:
Research questions are firmed up, engaging policymakers and other likely research users in the identification of questions that lend themselves to inter-regional research and lesson-learning. Questions are of a causal policy nature: what leads to what outcomes under which conditions?

RESEARCH DESIGN:
The research design and methods are tailored to the research question. This may require the synthesis of existing knowledge and/or the use of qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods for original data collection and analysis.

REGIONAL RESEARCH:
Regional research is carried out by the relevant research partners in one or more regions, within a common research framework agreed by the partners, using comparable methods and data sources as far as possible.

COMPARATIVE RESEARCH:
Evidence from the different regions is brought together, typically using methods of similarity and difference, in order to draw out the inter-regional comparisons, conclusions and lessons.

RESEARCH PRODUCTS

Regional Evidence Papers
These documents contain an overview of regional evidence, as well as original data collection and analysis, on a particular research topic.

Comparative Evidence Papers
These documents contain a comparison between the experiences between different regions (e.g. between Africa and Latin America) on a particular topic, to support inter-regional lesson-learning.
EXCHANGE AND LEARNING

Based on the synthesis of existing knowledge and/or original research, the ELLA Network runs different activities to support access to and the assimilation of the research, so that this translates into meaningful knowledge that can be adapted, used and applied in different regional and country contexts. The main activities include:

**Online Communities (ELLA Learning Alliances)**
These bring together 150-300 professional peers from across the global south, from government, civil society, the research community and the private sector, in short structured exchange and learning programmes, in a private online interactive platform.

**Study Tours**
Which enable small groups of 10-12 policymakers and practitioners to visit another region and learn first-hand from their counterparts regions, often following on from participation in the online community.

**Awards**
Small bursaries that support professionals and organisations to help put into practice the learning acquired.

**Learning Groups**
Groups of 10-12 people which track the online programmes, for stakeholders who prefer face-to-face learning, often linked via video conference to those in other countries and regions.

**Dissemination events**
Ranging from conferences, to workshops, to individual meetings.

**Video Conferences and Webinars**
To promote live interactive learning and discussion.
15 Partners in the ELLA Network from across Latin America, Africa and South Asia, with an enhanced capacity for inter-regional research collaboration, knowledge sharing across regions, to informing evidence-based policies and practices

200+ research papers and communication materials produced, including working papers, journal articles (forthcoming), guides, briefs, research summaries, research organisation descriptions, online community highlights, videos, and infographics

30 Themes researched on economic development, governance and social issues and environmental management

70+ Learning Groups dissemination events and workshops held in Africa and South Asia to promote learning based on the research

100+ Development portals containing, referencing and linking to ELLA research and communication materials

0.5m+ Downloads of ELLA research papers and communication materials from ELLA Network partners sites

40+ Bursaries: ‘Learning into Practice’ Awards granted to support uptake and use of the ELLA research and learning

11 Study Tours organised to six different countries in Latin America, for over 100 participants, to study and see first-hand the region’s policy and practices at work

3000 Participants in twelve online exchange and learning communities (ELLA Learning Alliances), promoting structured exchange and learning. Run over 3-6 months each, centred on online discussion and webinars based on the research

*As of January 2017
SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Our research and learning has focused on:

**Extractive industries:**
Sustainable development of the sector, including revenue generation and management, social licensing of investments, environmental safeguards, conflict management, and the generation of value-added and diversification through Local Content policies.

**Rural livelihoods:**
The promotion of smallholder farming through commercialisation for those seeking this route, and policies that respond to the needs of pastoralists who are among the most marginalised groups in most societies.

**Labour markets:**
Policies geared towards the heterogeneity of informal labour and firms, and employment promotion through active labour market policies.
Lessons on extractive industries social licensing and environmental planning from the 2012 Learning Alliance were taken to the Land Use Planning Bill, and to promote Free Prior and Informed Consent. Four years later, a journalist participant in the Oil and Gas Local Content Learning Alliance is promoting stakeholders participation to stimulate local employment and business in the oil-rich Voltain Basin.

Lessons from the 2012 Extractive Industries and 2016 Oil and Gas Local Content Learning Alliances have fed into the development of the oil sector policy, on revenue generation and sharing and economic diversification. Ideas on farmers’ business skills development from the 2013 Smallholders Learning Alliance used by the Uganda Coffee Development Association.

Findings from the 2015-16 research into how to manage labour market informality to promote inclusive growth disseminated at a major conference and fed into policy considerations on relaxing constraints on informality.

Lessons on securing collective land access rights for pastoralists, from the 2015-16 research and exchange on Pastoralism, were fed into consideration of the country’s Land Bill, to promote sustainable land use and support some of Kenya’s poorest groups.

Latin American evidence on managing the extractive industries from the 2012 exchange and study tour used in helping developing a Mining Sustainability Index, in training materials at the Business and Community Foundation and in disseminating lesson to Oil India Ltd.
Our research and learning has focused on:

**Climate change adaptation in rural areas:**
Adaptation by farming communities in arid, semi-arid and mountain ecosystems, through improved water technologies, traditional knowledge and the strengthening of agro-biodiversity.

**Urban environmental resilience:**
Environmental governance, urban transport, waste and other policies for mitigation and adaptation to climate change, and institutionalising city-level disaster risk management, including early warning systems.

**Green growth:**
Policies in the energy, building and water management sectors.
**NIGERIA**

Lessons and materials on Disaster Risk Reduction from the 2013 Climate Resilient Cities Learning Alliance used in for training at Benue State University, and in promoting climate-related risk reduction in Makurdi city.

**NEPAL**

Findings on water use technologies for drought threatened farmers, witnessed first-hand in a study tour, taken from North East Brazil to Western Nepal. Rio de Janeiro’s flooding and other disaster risk management strategies adapted to the resource constrained environment of Birgunj municipality.

**KENYA**

Lessons from the 2012 Learning Alliance on Climate Change Adaption in Arid and Semi-Arid Regions incorporated into the Kenya Climate Change Action Plan, used by the climate change knowledge centre at the Ministry of Livestock and ads training materials at Kenyatta University.

**GHANA**

Learning Alliance on Climate Change adaptation provided inputs to the national climate change policy and was also used by the Environmental Protection Agency for its contributions to these policies.

**ZIMBABWE**

Lessons and materials from 2012 research and exchange on Climate Change adaptation used in the curriculum for a virtual climate change school reaching 800 students in 30 African countries, and in helping prepare a UNDP funded project on climate change.
GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL ISSUES

Our research and learning has focused on:

**Human and Gender Rights:**
The promotion of human rights and indigenous and minority rights, through National Institutions, strategic litigation, and rights-based approaches to public policy making, plus policies for gender equity through affirmative action and gender-budgeting, as well as approaches to tackling violence against women, with a particular focus on addressing domestic violence.

**Citizen security:**
Community based crime prevention approaches.

**Government Accountability**
To citizens (vertical accountability), through policies and programmes that promote transparency and access to information, plus citizen participation in, and oversight, of budgets and programmes at each level of government; and from the Executive to Parliament (horizontal accountability).
Civil society took forward lessons from the 2012 Learning Alliance on Citizen Oversight of government to re-structure the work of the Ghana Anti-Corruption Coalition, to work with the Ghana Journalist Network on transparency, and to promote community scorecards. During 2015-16, comparative research with Mexico helped civil society and female Parliamentarians understand better how to push for more action on domestic violence.

GHANA

Civil society and lawyers have used lessons from the 2012-13 Citizen Oversight and Human Rights Learning Alliances to press public interest litigation on transparency, to advocate for recognition of indigenous rights and to push for strengthening human rights institutions.

NEPAL

Lessons from the 2015-16 ELLA comparative work on the accountability of government to the legislature, taken to the Kenyan Parliamentary and the East African Legislative Assembly.

KENYA

A public body has taken forward the use of community scorecards for services in townships, the Democracy Institute used lessons to train on access to information, and civil society has learnt about strategic litigation and other tactics to promote human rights.

SOUTH AFRICA
Practical Action is an international NGO that uses technology to challenge poverty. Spreading knowledge is at the heart of its work. The ELLA Network is led by Practical Action Consulting Latin America (Soluciones Prácticas Consultoría) practicalaction.org/consulting-latin-america

The Institute of Development Studies (IDS) at Sussex University, UK is a leading global centre for international development research, teaching and communication. Within the ELLA Network, IDS has lead responsibility for research capacity development and ensuring research quality. ids.ac.uk

The ELLA Network is led by Practical Action Consulting In Partnership with the Institute of Development Studies (IDS), UK
And consists of fifteen associated research centres in Africa and Latin America:

[COLOMBIA] The Foundation for Higher Education and Development (Fedesarrollo) is a Colombian private non-profit ‘think tank’, engaged in a wide range of social and economic research. As part of the ELLA Network, Fedesarrollo teamed up with the Development Policy Research Unit at Cape Town University to examine labour informality.

fedesarrollo.org.co

[SOUTH AFRICA] The Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU), in the School of Economics at the University of Cape Town engages in policy-relevant socio-economic research. It is one of Africa’s premier research institutions. In the ELLA Network, DPRU has undertaken joint research on informality with Fedesarrollo.

dpru.uct.ac.za
[PERU] El Grupo de Análisis para el Desarrollo (GRADE) is a private research centre conducting applied public policy research. GRADE is one of the most important social research centres in Latin America. In the ELLA Network, GRADE has researched and run learning programmes on extractive industry and rural issues, teaming up with Tegemeo Institute, Kenya on pastoralism.

grade.org.pe

[KENYA] The Tegemeo Institute of Agricultural Policy and Development is a policy research institute at Egerton University. Within the ELLA Network, Tegemeo conducted research and exchange programmes on pastoralism with GRADE, Peru.

tegemeo.org

[MEXICO] Fundar Centre for Analysis and Research is an independent, interdisciplinary and plural institution committed to strengthening citizen participation and deepening democracy. As part of the ELLA Network, Fundar has worked on participation, citizen oversight, human rights and gender equity issues and more recently on domestic violence in association with CEGENSA, Ghana.

fundar.org.mx

[GHANA] The Centre for Gender Studies and Advocacy (CEGENSA) at the University of Ghana, Legon is an outlet for the University community on policies, resources and information on gender related issues. As a member of the ELLA network, CEGENSA paired up with Funder to work on issues of domestic violence.

cegensa.ug.edu.gh

[EL SALVADOR] The Doctor Guillermo Manuel Ungo Foundation (FundaUngo) is a private non-profit development organization. FundaUngo conducts academic research and applied studies, and provides training and consulting services. As part of the ELLA Network, it paired up with Ibadan University, Nigeria, to research and run learning programmes on crime prevention.

fundaungo.org.sv

[NIGERIA] The Department of Communication and Language Arts at the University of Ibadan runs programmes leading to undergraduate and postgraduate degrees to DPhil level in the Communication Arts. As part of the ELLA Network, the Department expanded its research to focus on community based crime prevention, working alongside FundaUngo from El Salvador.

arts.ui.edu.ng
[ARGENTINA] The Centre for the Implementation of Public Policy for Equity and Growth (CIPPEC) is an Argentine independent, non-partisan, non-profit organisation. Its core focus is on social and economic issues, the state and government. As part of the ELLA Network, CIPPEC worked with OSSREA on the ‘horizontal’ accountability of the executive to Parliament.

cippec.org

[ECUADOR] Grupo Faro is a public policy centre that promotes evidence-based development policies in Ecuador and Latin America. Grupo Faro is a member of several networks. As part of the ELLA Network it teamed up with ACODE, Uganda on local content in the oil and gas sector.

grupofaro.org

[ETHIOPIA] The Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa (OSSREA) is a non-governmental, non-profit research network of social scientists and institutions engaged in teaching and research in the social sciences in Eastern and Southern Africa. As part of the ELLA Network, OSSREA paired up with CIPPEC Argentina to explore executive accountability to Parliaments.

ossrea.net

[UGANDA] Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment (ACODE) is an independent public policy research and advocacy think tank and is one of the regional leaders on governance, trade, environment, and science and technology issues. Within the ELLA Network, ACODE has worked with Grupo Faro, Ecuador on local content in the oil and gas sector.

acode-u.org

Though managed by Practical Action Consulting Latin America (Soluciones Prácticas Consulturia), the ELLA Network is networked with other Practical Action regional offices in Africa and Asia. To this date, PA has offices in West Africa, Eastern Africa, Southern Africa and South Asia (Kenya, Zimbabwe, Ghana, Nepal, India and Bangladesh).

practicalaction.org/where-we-work
OUR COMMUNITY

The ELLA Community has been created in the firm conviction that ideas that result from global interaction can be powerful and transformative. For this reason, active ELLA participants as far back as 2011 have been brought together in an online community to build bridges and encourage networking between Latin America, Africa and Asia, to promote collaborative inter-regional research and knowledge sharing.

ELLA Researchers:

**Cristina Fernández**  
Fedesarrollo (Colombia)

I feel that being part of this project has given a lot to me as a researcher. On one hand, it has allowed me to gain a broader perspective, a more international one, and know different points of view. On the other, it has taught us a lot about how to share knowledge, and that might be one of the most important parts of doing research.

**Ayobami Ojebode**  
University of Ibadan (Nigeria)

ELLA is a unique project in that it emphasises south-south learning exchange, policy engagement, thorough research design and execution. Not all projects of this magnitude succeed in bringing together these three aspects, and ELLA has brought them together in a very beautiful and productive way.

**Cecilia Toledo**  
Fundar (Mexico)

[The ELLA Network] has allowed me to connect with what is being done in Africa, with what’s happening there, and it has helped me realise that we have many things in common even though we have different cultural contexts. This has made me eager to keep learning more from and work closer with African organizations.
Participant testimonies:

Ram Chandra Khanal  
Independent Adviser (Nepal)  
I’m pretty confident that the learning I had from ELLA helped me to widen my work as a consultant. The experience gave me a lot of opportunities to learn and helped me to enhance my capabilities and to build my confidence.

Venessa Padayachee  
National Institute of Crime Prevention and Reintegration of Offenders (South Africa)  
You get so caught up in the day to day, so I really enjoyed that experience [Learning Alliance and visit to Mexico] to reflect and think that there is something I can try in South Africa. It’s funny, sometimes you have to go out of your own country to gain perspective.

Adolf Awuku Bekoe  
Domestic Violence Coalition (Ghana)  
You might have thought about something in your home country, and you may be wondering, “is it possible?” [...] And then you get the opportunity to go into a study tour and you realise [your idea] can be more than a dream; that it’s possible; realisable. It can be done.
**CONTACT US**

**ELLA Network:**
South South Research, Exchange and Learning

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