

DLP is an international research initiative that explores how leadership, power and political processes drive or block successful development. We focus on the role of leadership in forming locally-legitimate institutions that can promote development outcomes – from sustainable growth, to political stability and inclusive social development. Our findings have helped shape international thinking on the politics of development and influenced aid programming in DFAT and beyond.

FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

The DFAT-DLP Partnership has implemented a portfolio of collaborative research projects since 2008. We are now looking to fund innovative research during our third phase, 2019-2022.

Why developmental leadership?

Developmental leadership is the strategic, collective and political process of making change happen. It is the mobilisation of people and resources in pursuit of shared goals. Coalitions' power and effectiveness hinges on their ability to contest and de-legitimise the ideas that underpin 'sticky' institutions, and legitimise an alternative set. If they can do that, they can reformulate institutions in ways that are locally legitimate, and make change more sustainable.

Funding available

DLP funding is available for innovative research projects that address one of our key questions on the role of leadership in development. Funding is available for up to two years, to a maximum value of AUD 96,000. Projects should address one of our core research questions, and produce findings that are relevant to policy and practice.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- 1 How is leadership understood in different contexts?
- 2 Where do leaders come from?
- 3 How do leaders collectively influence development outcomes?
- 4 How can leadership be supported?

Closing date for applications is 12.00 noon (ACT time), 31 August 2019. Applications are invited using the form available at www.dlprog.org

Informal enquiries welcome at dlp@contacts.bham.ac.uk

About DLP

DLP is funded by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) through a strategic partnership between the Development Policy Division, the University of Birmingham and La Trobe University. DLP is now in its third phase (2019-2022). As an international collaboration, we work in partnership with local researchers across the world.

In line with the Foreign Policy White Paper and the Effective Governance: Strategy for Aid Investments, Australia remains committed to generating new ideas about what works for aid investments targeting governance reforms and institutional change. Working in politically informed ways and supporting the emergence of developmental leadership is key to this agenda.

The research generated through the DLP has relevant practical application for Australia's aid policy and investments in the region. DLP research has been used to improve the effectiveness of various Australian development programs.

DFAT staff and researchers together define the research topics, research is carried out in an in depth and rigorous way, and DFAT and researchers together develop the policy and practice implications. This ensures that the findings are relevant and well adapted to the DFAT environment.

Our key findings to date are summarised in 'Inside the Black Box of Political Will: Ten Years of findings from the Developmental Leadership Program'.

Our approach to research

DLP undertakes all its activities, including research and engagement, in accordance with its core principles:

- * **Rigour:** All research is expected to follow principles of academic rigour to ensure quality, credibility and reliability to contribute to evidence-based policymaking.
- * **Relevance:** Funding will be provided where research aims to produce findings that are directly relevant to policy, practice, and the achievement of positive development outcomes.
- * **Ethics and integrity:** All our research is designed and implemented with high integrity and a firm commitment to ethics. Compliance with University of Birmingham and other applicable ethics approvals will underpin this commitment.
- * **Independence:** Independence is a critical element of DLP's intellectual integrity and credibility as a serious academic research program, which is essential for its effective impact. Its intellectual agenda – along with this set of principles – will guide its work.
- * **Inclusiveness:** DLP research will always consider the extent to which there are gender or identity issues that require examination as part of a research project. Projects should work to include diverse perspectives and voices, and consider other issues of disadvantage and exclusion such as disability.
- * **Constructive collaboration:** DLP is committed to producing locally-owned research that has a meaningful impact on policy and practice. We expect all research projects to be carried out through international collaborations and genuine partnerships with local researchers.

Funding available

Applications are invited for small or large grants as detailed in the table below. We anticipate that the majority of funding will be used for covering local fieldwork and data collection costs, working with local researchers and collaborators, and related travel and subsistence. Funding cannot be used for equipment such as laptops or recording devices.

Research should address DLPs core research themes, set out in Annex B. All projects will be expected to commence by no later than January 2020.

Grant	Duration	Purpose	Outputs	Value
Small grant	Up to 12 months	A small grant to cover the cost of research expenses, engagement activities, and a portion of time for researchers in the global south for a short piece of research.	Report on findings (x2) Presentations (x2) Innovative outputs (x1) Impact report (x1)	Up to AUD 38,000
Large grant	Up to 24 months	A large grant to cover the cost of research expenses, engagement activities, and a portion of time for researchers in the global south. A longitudinal or comparative element based on more than one fieldwork visit.	Report on findings (x3) Presentations (x3) Innovative outputs (x2) Impact report (x1)	Up to AUD 96,000

Outputs

Research papers	Projects will produce short, 4,000-word summaries of key findings, written for a policy and practitioner audience.
Popular outputs	Projects will be encouraged and supported to translate their findings into blogs, videos, or other innovative formats.
Presentations and workshops	Projects are expected to communicate their research to DFAT and local stakeholders, or the wider international academic community.
Engagement and impact report	All projects will be required to submit an engagement and impact report at the end of award, to enable DLP to support and track the uptake of findings.
Peer-reviewed journal articles	We expect that all grants will lead to high quality, peer reviewed, academic articles published in top journals. The potential intellectual contribution of the project a key assessment criteria.

ANNEX A: SELECTION CRITERIA

All proposals should use the application form available from dlprog.org. All applications for funding will be assessed according to the following key criteria:

Criteria	Key questions
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS	
Clarity of research design Clarity of objectives and research design.	Does the proposal set out clear, straightforward research questions? Are the research questions answerable? Is the selection of cases justified (where applicable)? Does the proposal include a conceptual framework? Is the research addressing a clear gap in the literature, policy problem, or practical challenge?
Methodological rigour Appropriateness and validity of proposed methods.	Is the proposed method <i>suited</i> to answering the research questions? What is the potential internal and external validity of the research? Do the researchers have the methodological skills to carry out the research? Can the appropriate data can be collected?
Significance Significance to DLP’s intellectual agenda and DFAT’s strategic priorities.	Is the proposal clearly addressing one of DLP’s core research questions? How far does it inform DFAT’s strategic priorities? ¹ Does the research provide direct insight into the Indo-Pacific region? What is the wider significance of the research to global debates? How innovative is the proposal? Is the research likely to have practical implications?
Gender and inclusion Incorporation of gender and inclusion into design and analysis.	Does the research design adequately recognise gender and other relevant inter-sectional social dynamics? Will the proposed methodology adequately capture gender and other identity-based dynamics, including disability? Is the research team gender-inclusive?
IMPACT AND UPTAKE	
Potential for impact Policy and programmatic relevance, and systems for dissemination and uptake.	Does the research have a clearly identified audience? Is there a well-articulated pathway(s) from research to influence? Are the proposed dissemination and uptake activities likely to lead to impact? Is there a clear communications plan?
Local collaboration and stakeholder engagement Feasibility and sustainability of local partnerships.	Is the research designed in collaboration with local researchers? Is the collaboration meaningful and speaks to genuine partnership? Is there a history of successful collaboration between the partners? Is the collaboration likely to continue beyond the project? Is building local research capacity a viable aim? Is there a feasible plan for local stakeholder engagement?
Collaboration with leading global researchers	Is the research team linked with leading global researchers working on the topic? Are they able to collaborate internationally to bring a comparative perspective on leading themes?

¹ <https://dfat.gov.au/aid/Pages/australias-aid-program.aspx>

RESEARCH OPERATIONALISATION	
Feasibility Overall likelihood of delivery.	Is the proposed research feasible within the given timeframe? Do the researchers have the necessary skills, training, and experience to carry out the research? What are the potential external and internal threats to the research going ahead? Have these been accounted for? Do the researchers have good access to the research site and participants? Is the required research capacity in place? Are the necessary research permissions in place, or relationships to facilitate them?
Value for money Costs versus impact.	Do the proposed outputs represent value for money? Are the costs of researcher time within the acceptable range? Is there a reasonable balance of senior and junior research time allocated to the project? Is the research sufficiently innovative to expect better overall outcomes? Is the research designed such that the process and outcomes will be transparent and accountable to the funder?

Essential Criteria

No DLP project will be approved without fulfilling the essential criteria below.

Criteria	Detail
Ethical approach	Any successful research projects will require formal ethics approval at the point of award. All research will need to go through the researcher(s)' home institution's ethics approval process. In order to ensure that ethics consideration is sufficiently rigorous, UoB will review all other institutional ethics approval to verify that it meets the expected standards.
Child protection and safety measures in place.	All organisation must have adequate child protection measures in place and proposed researchers have the necessary clearance/checks.
Counter Terrorism	The organisation must not be included on the Attorney General's Department (AGD) or DFAT terrorism list.
Fraud	The organisation must have appropriate fraud control and prevention processes and related management and reporting systems.



ANNEX B: DLP RESEARCH FOCUS AND THEMES

HOW IS LEADERSHIP UNDERSTOOD IN DIFFERENT CONTEXTS?

What do people want from leaders across different settings?

How do leaders actively cultivate perceptions of their legitimacy?

How do leaders navigate between different cultural expectations?

WHERE DO LEADERS COME FROM?

How do future leaders accrue and make use of resources?

What are the various pathways in and through leadership?

How does the identity, personality styles and traits of leaders inform the choices they make?

HOW DO LEADERS COLLECTIVELY INFLUENCE DEVELOPMENT?

What is the role of identity and intersectionality in collective action?

How do collectives build internal and external legitimacy?

How does collective action happen in contexts where civic space is shrinking?

How do collectives change norms and ideas?

HOW CAN DEVELOPMENTAL LEADERSHIP BE SUPPORTED?

What mix of support enhances leaders' resources to expand their choices?

How have successful programs navigated and adapted to promote developmental leadership?

How do programs help shape the enabling environment for developmental leadership?

How can leadership development and training be tailored to specific cultural contexts?

How are development agencies adapting their own leadership, policies and business practices to support developmental leadership?



CROSS-CUTTING THEMES AND APPROACHES

DLP’s research has converged on a number of cross-cutting themes and approaches that we propose will distinguish DLP’s research from the body of literature already available and enable it to make a key contribution to knowledge and practice. Taken together, our experience suggests that to understand **why leadership matters for development** - which is our core, underlying goal - our research *should*:

<i>Be situated and contextualised</i>	Leadership research needs to give a ‘situational’ account of leadership that examines how perceptions are formed, and the impression they make on leaders, both in the proximate context (organisational setting, sector) and wider distal context (political environment, cultural norms, gendered power relations). Much of the leadership literature has a normative, Western-centric bias. Only by understanding cultural perceptions of leadership in context can we understand what kind of combination of individual and collective support might be required in different contexts, and on different issues. The contexts DLP is particularly interested in are closed political spaces, fragile states, and hybrid political systems. In practice, this means paying attention to local cultural repertoires, histories, values and norms in our explanation of the significance of leadership.
<i>Use interdisciplinary perspectives</i>	A number of disciplinary lenses emerged as potentially useful in DLP’s foundational work, including new and feminist institutionalism, elements of management/ organisational theory such as contingency theory, and complexity thinking, political science literature on candidates, and social psychology approaches to understand motivations. Overall, leadership research needs to break out of its management sphere, and DLP can contribute to this by applying interdisciplinary theories to leadership for development.
<i>Make connections between levels of leadership</i>	There seems to be a ‘meso level’ gap in our understanding of leadership. The focus of much research – including in DLP 2 – tends to be on formal leadership roles (i.e. following reasonably determined paths through higher education, political leadership, etc) or on community or coalition level leadership (women’s groups and coalitions, etc.) with little in between. But to understand leadership, particularly at the collective level, we need to understand how leadership functions across local, national and international levels, and how each of these levels connect and enable/disable one another.
<i>Focus on complex problems</i>	We assume that leadership is key to addressing the kinds of complex recurring problems we see in development, from urbanisation, state-building, to tackling non-communicable diseases. To solve these pressing issues, leaders of all varieties need to work together, across sectors and different levels of society. We are particularly interested in how cross-sectoral leadership that addresses ‘wicked problems’ like climate crisis or migration.



TABLE OF RESEARCH THEMES

Sub-theme/research question	Rationale	Types of research/cases of interest
RQ1: HOW IS LEADERSHIP UNDERSTOOD ACROSS DIFFERENT CONTEXTS?		
What do people want from leaders across different settings?	We can't fully understand leaders without also understanding followers. Leadership research provides a menu of factors that can influence what people want from leaders such as performance, identity, leadership styles, or goods and rewards. But when do these factors matter, and why? And how do perceptions vary across the different identities of followers?	<i>Perceptions surveys; comparative studies of perceptions across and within countries, and between different cultures, spheres and sectors; non-prototypical positive outliers</i>
How do leaders actively cultivate perceptions of their legitimacy?	While the outcomes of leadership are well studied, the <i>process</i> whereby leaders persuade followers of their legitimacy, and maintain it, is much less well examined. How are perceptions of leader legitimacy formed and sustained? This is a crucial missing link in understanding developmental leadership, because leaders can only lead change effectively if they are perceived as legitimate.	<i>Discourse analysis; process tracing to examine legitimation over time.</i>
How do leaders navigate between different cultural expectations?	What happens when leaders have to lead where there is no common culture, for example, across multiple groups with different identity characteristics, or different sectors and spaces with different norms? Does this vary when trying to initiate or manage a group? This is often key to solving complex problems that are at the heart of development. Individual leaders often have to bridge cultures to build coalitions.	<i>Comparative case studies of cross-cultural leadership in coalitions.</i>

Sub-theme/research question	Rationale	Types of research/cases of interest
RQ2: WHERE DO LEADERS COME FROM?		
How do future leaders accrue and make use of resources?	Research on the sociology of elites identifies a range of resources—familial, education, professional, networks—that enable people to become leaders. We need to know more about the choices leaders make about how to employ these resources over the course of their lives, the dilemmas they confront, and how they resolve them.	<i>Individual narratives of leadership journeys; (comparative) case studies of leadership journeys which use different resources and capital; tracer studies and network analysis.</i>
What are the various pathways in and through leadership?	The fact that leaders often follow a similar trajectory or pathway into and through leadership roles suggests that they tend to make similar choices at key points in their lives. We know that education builds future leaders. But we need to know more about <i>alternative</i> , non-elite leadership pathways (e.g. through technical colleges, government, small businesses, or church organisations), and how do these pathways effect future leadership choices?	<i>Individual narratives of leadership journeys; (comparative) case studies of leadership journeys which use different resources and capital; positive outliers (leadership against the odds); network analysis.</i>
How does the identity, personality styles and traits of leaders inform the choices they make?	To understand the choices leaders make, and the pathways this enables, we need to know more about what motivates them to pursue developmental change. The choices actors make are rarely as ‘rational’ as pure rational choice theory would have us believe. We also need to know how identity and biography enables or constraints choice.	<i>Individual narratives of leadership; (comparative) case studies of what experiences motivate leaders to act, and how their values are formed.</i>

Sub-theme/research question	Rationale	Types of research/cases of interest
RQ3: HOW DO LEADERS COLLECTIVELY INFLUENCE DEVELOPMENT?		
What is the role of identity and intersectionality in collective action?	There is a key gap in understanding how identity influences the ability of marginalised groups to act collectively. In some cases, identity may be advantageous for these groups in their negotiations with outside actors. We need to explore empirical cases where these groups have successfully mobilised, and the conditions that led to success. And crucially how this impinges at different points of the collective action cycle / aspects – how does it matter for formation, for maintenance, for effectiveness, for tactics, for sustainability?	<i>(Comparative) case studies of the leadership of women’s organisation, coalitions and Disabled People’s Organisations as well as intersectional initiatives; comparing more or less successful initiatives; positive outliers.</i>
How do collectives build internal and external legitimacy?	Legitimacy influences coalitions’ ability to represent and secure pro-poor reform. The factors that influence internal legitimacy (to members) are different from factors that influence legitimacy of a group to the outsiders. We need to unpack the drivers and mechanisms for building internal and external legitimacy, and the trade-offs in making these choices.	<i>Discourse analysis; (Comparative) case studies of more or less successful strategies for legitimation, and the internal dynamics of coalition legitimacy.</i>
How does collective action happen in contexts where civic space is shrinking?	Many countries around the world are witnessing shrinking space for political and civic rights activism, which has specific implications for how marginalised groups can engage. We need to understand how collective action responds and adapts to different political conditions, and what strategies work best under what conditions to manoeuvre space for reform.	<i>(Comparative) case studies of how coalitions form, evolve and adapt in different political spaces; positive outliers in terms of success in closed spaces.</i>
How do collectives change norms and ideas?	Ideas play an important role in reform. Coalitions or collectives have to ensure their messages fit with local cultures, and sometimes deploy multiple framings to ensure this. And when should this go with the grain and when should it challenge it, and with what consequences? We need to better understand how collectives ensure their messages, and ideational work, are effective at changing ideas and norms.	<i>Perceptions surveys; (comparative) case studies; discourse analysis.</i>

Sub-theme/research question	Rationale	Types of research/cases of interest
RQ 4: WHAT CAN BE DONE TO SUPPORT THESE PROCESSES?		
What mix of support enhances leaders' resources to expand their choices?	Many leadership programs are premised on the assumption that leaders can be 'made' through building skills, education, networks, resources and other opportunities. But we need to know more about how to help future leaders to accumulate and leverage these resources and capacities, and to expand their menu of choices.	<i>Surveys of outcomes of individual leadership training; comparative case studies of leadership training programs.</i>
How have successful programs navigated and adapted to promote developmental leadership?	There are a number of common features of programs that have successfully supported developmental leadership. This includes strong political economy analysis, locally-led problem-solving, nurturing and expanding the spaces for change, or convening and brokering relationships. We need to be learning from success in these and other areas, but also comparing cases across different settings.	<i>(Comparative) case studies of more or less successful support to individual or collective leadership.</i>
How can leadership development and training be tailored to specific cultural contexts?	Training curricula tend to be based on leadership and management skills found to be important in Western institutions. While some of these skills and values may well be transferrable, they can also overlook the culture and context. We need to learn more about how leadership development programmes take account of local cultures, values and ideas to maximise results. And work with local leaders to champion such approaches.	<i>(Comparative) case studies of leadership training.</i>
How do programs and diplomacy help shape the enabling environment for developmental leadership?	Programs tend to focus on the potential of individuals or groups of individuals to lead, but ignore the wider enabling environment in which developmental leadership can emerge. We need to know how programs that support individual and collective leadership can contribute to overcoming structural constraints and broader societal change. In addition, how can programs change the context or authorising environment or help leaders to change their context to make developmental change more likely.	<i>(Comparative) case studies of programs that have affected the enabling environment directly or indirectly.</i>



How are development agencies adapting their own leadership, policies and business practices to support developmental leadership?

Supporting developmental leadership needs an internal enabling environment in development agencies. The literature on Doing Development Differently and Thinking and Working Politically suggests a number of common organisational features that help programs to effectively support developmental leadership. We need to understand this better. The Human Resource and M&E challenges are key.

Action research; (Comparative) case studies of more or less successful programs.
