

## Preface

This book represents roughly ten years of work on open development in the Global South at the International Development Research Centre (IDRC). The seeds for this work were planted around 2008, when the IDRC program area devoted to information and communication technologies for development (ICT4D) noticed a significant trend emerging in the field concerning openness. The working hypothesis at the time was that open systems related to data, science, innovation, and education could amplify and transform social activities in ways that would radically alter the impacts of ICTs on development.

To better understand the phenomenon, IDRC launched a call for papers in early 2009 to generate critical discussions about the potential of openness in and for development. That call resulted in a volume published in 2013, *Open Development: Networked Innovations in International Development*. That book was the first comprehensive treatment of the matter. However, given the limited amount of research on the subject at the time, it was more about potential and possibilities than realities on the ground.

The last decade of funding research for development focused on openness in various domains has helped to fill this empirical gap—and has been incredibly fruitful in terms of surfacing the realities as to how and in what contexts openness supports development. We believe that there are constructive lessons to draw from these years of research, and we have tried to do so in this volume.

We are hopeful that lessons from this research can be used to improve the production, distribution, and use of open resources in ways that facilitate and challenge people to look beyond their own positions and perspectives.

