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Theory and practice of development dilemmas
Hivos Knowledge Programme Dialogue
The Hague, 29 September – 1 October 2010

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Hivos Knowledge Programme

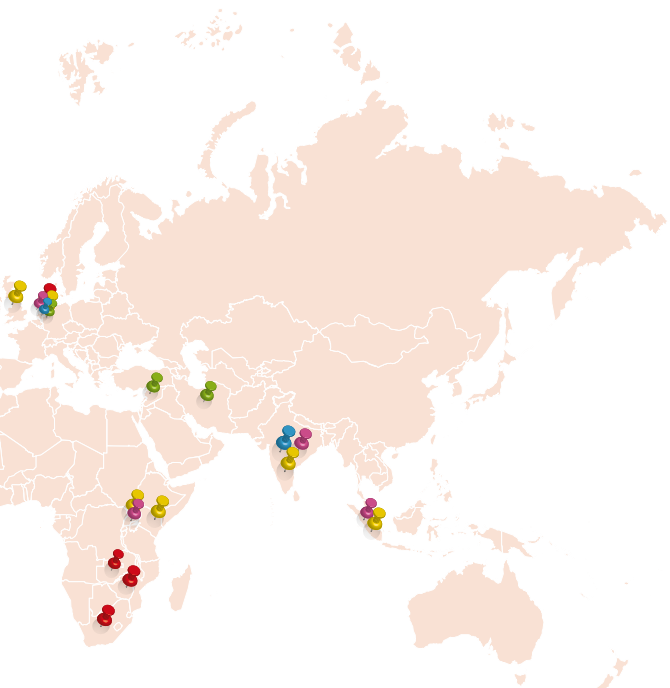
Civil Society Building
Costa Rica / Guatemala / Honduras / Mexico
Nicaragua / The Netherlands / Peru / South Africa
Zambia / Zimbabwe

Civil Society in West Asia
Iran / The Netherlands / Syria

Promoting Pluralism
Indonesia / India / The Netherlands / Uganda

Small Producer Agency
Bolivia / Guatemala / India / Indonesia /
Kenia / The Netherlands / Nicaragua / Uganda /
United Kingdom

Digital Natives
India / The Netherlands



Knowledge and Change
Theory and practice of development dilemmas

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Knowledge & Change

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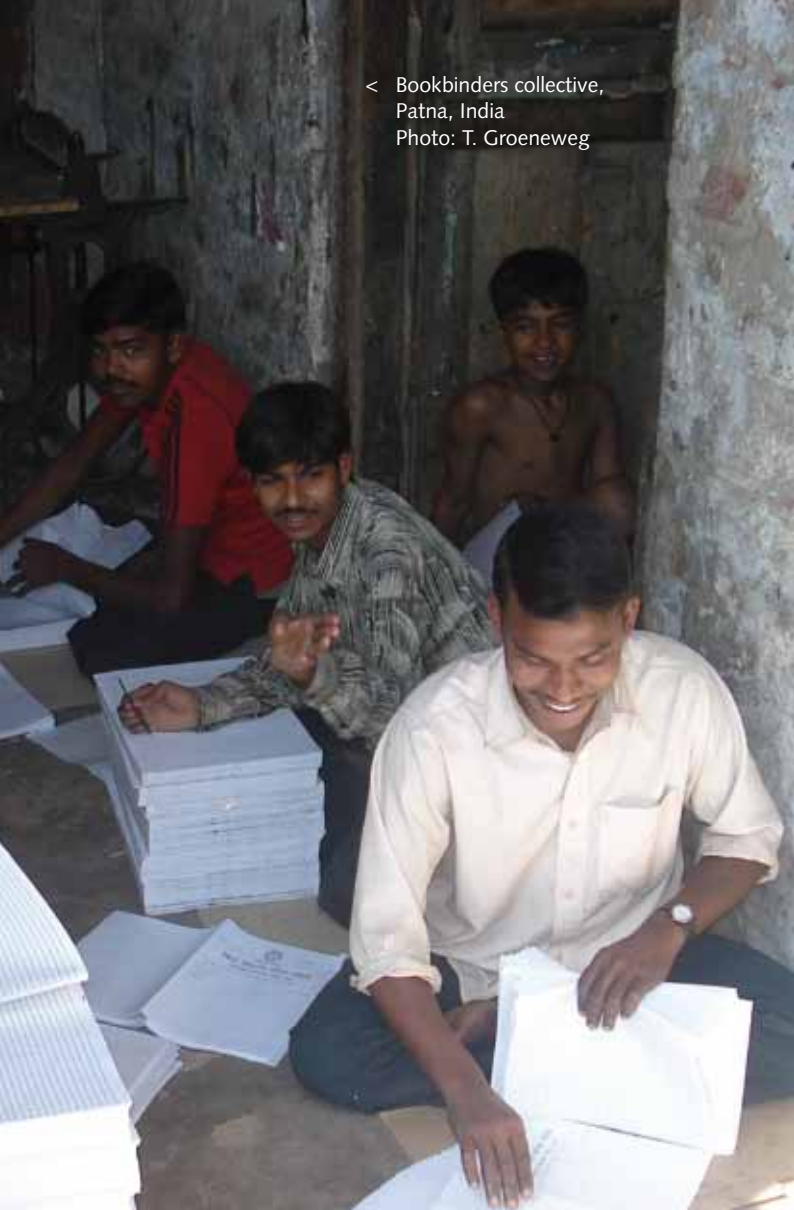

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Colophon

This conference booklet has been made for the 'Knowledge and Change: Theory and practice of development dilemmas' dialogue (The Hague, 29 September - 1 October 2010). It is one of the outcomes of the Hivos Knowledge Programme (www.hivos.net). We thank everyone that has contributed to this booklet.

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"Knowledge is embodied information upon which people can act or not as the case may be"

Alan Fowler

Table of Contents

< TLC protesters, Costa Rica, 2007

Preface by Manuela Monteiro

Know what you change, change what you know

In fifty years of development cooperation many things have changed, for better and for worse, sometimes as we imagined they would change and often not. Certainly, the development sector is still struggling with persistent dilemmas. That's why we at Hivos believe that new perspectives and knowledge about the rapidly evolving dynamics of development and social change are needed. Since 2007 Hivos, together with its key-partners – ISS, UvH, UvA, IIED, CIS – has made substantial efforts in the domain of knowledge and change. In this process, Hivos has attracted many academic, NGO, policy and business partners. After four years of intensive dialogue between theory and practice, we are more than ever convinced of the need for cooperation between the actors in these two realms.

This 'Knowledge & Change dialogue' is the first time that the different networks in the Knowledge Programme have come face to face to share ideas and experiences from their interactions at local, national and international levels. Sharing these experiences is not only about learning more about which processes of change we aim to contribute to, but also about changing our way of knowing. This process stimulates new ideas, practices, strategies and alliances, but also creates new discrepancies, dilemmas and conflicts. While this is very challenging, I personally think it is also very timely and necessary.

It is timely because of the momentum of increased interest in knowledge and reflection in the development sector: recent reports by multilateral organisations, donors and ministries (such as the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) report) confirm the sector's need for knowledge enhancement. And it is necessary because notwithstanding this increased interest, a huge gulf remains between expression of good intentions and actually investing the time, resources and long-term commitment.

That is why I am pleased that we are hosting this 'Knowledge & Change dialogue' in collaboration with our key-partners. I am also very pleased that other individuals have joined this endeavour to share and discuss their experiences in the field of knowledge and change. Hopefully this dialogue will deepen our understanding of how knowledge can – and can fail to – trigger change, and create opportunities to foster new alliances. Together we can make a strong case for a much needed knowledge intensification of the sector, starting by strengthening our own practices.

I look forward to meeting you and wish you a fruitful and inspiring meeting.

Manuela Monteiro
Executive Director Hivos

Introduction to the Knowledge & Change dialogue

The developmental challenges facing the world are daunting. Extreme poverty and social exclusion continue to persist. Socio-economic inequality and fundamentalism are on the increase, exacerbated by the adverse effects of climate change and the global crises of food, fuel and finance. In the rapidly changing global socio-political landscape, the development sector is struggling to live up to its own ambitions and public expectations. Being often caught between orthodoxies and fashions, the sector is not able to address persistent dilemmas it is faced with. Are civil society organisations agents of change or are they reproducing the status-quo? Are smallholders a relic or tomorrow's economic actors? Are clashes of internal and external agenda's in development (various players, institutions, geographies) resolvable?

New perspectives and new knowledge on the changing terrain and dynamics of development and social change are needed. Through a rethink of both practice and theory, guided by rigorous learning processes, a clear understanding of the greatly varying circumstances on the ground and fed by insights of different academic disciplines we can start getting our head around these dilemmas.

Recent reports by multilateral organisations, donors and ministries confirm the need for knowledge

intensification of the development sector. However huge gaps between the expressed need for knowledge for development and knowledge that empowers change in practice remain.

Over the last four years, Hivos together with its academic and civil society partners have explored the potential of academic-practitioner collaboration in five thematic Knowledge Programmes. This conference is organised to contribute to the debate on knowledge and change by sharing and discussing some of the emerging insights from our experiences.

At the dialogue we aim at reflecting both on theory and practice of development dilemmas as well as methodologies of knowledge development. Three key questions that can trigger responses to various persistent dilemmas are: How do citizens engage with power? Which new change agents really matter? How does knowledge trigger social change?

We look forward to exploring these and other questions with you during the coming three days. Jointly we can shed more light on significant development concerns. We wish you an inspiring dialogue.

The organising committee

Introduction to the Knowledge Programme

The Hivos Knowledge Programme is a platform for knowledge development on issues imperative to the global development sector. How to understand and innovate support for civil society building, how to promote pluralism in times of growing intolerance, how to adapt to rapid changes such as the globalisation of markets? The development sector needs new knowledge, and more specifically, appropriate knowledge to tackle specific knowledge gaps. This programme aims at developing knowledge on issues central to the work of civil society organisations and for the development sector at large. The main themes are: Civil Society Building, Promoting Pluralism, Civil Society in West Asia, Small Producer Agency in the Globalised Market and Digital Natives with a Cause?

www.hivos.net

Civil Society Building (CSB)

Hivos approached the Institute of Social Studies (ISS) in 2004 to set up a pilot for a new programme on knowledge development focusing on civil society building (CSB). This resulted into a productive collaboration and global interaction between development practitioners, researchers and activists to explore new ways of generating and using ideas and knowledge for change.

The Civil Society Building Programme aims at a better understanding of civil society dynamics in order to facilitate changes in the unequal balance of power in favour of vulnerable and marginalised groups. Three questions serve as a guideline throughout the programme:

1. How to understand the dynamics of civil society formation and the role of local actors in this process?
2. What is the role of external actors in civil society building?
3. How can civil society building as a process contribute to structural changes in unequal power balances in society?

The programme is managed by a team of international researchers and closely coordinated between ISS and Hivos, both in the Netherlands as well as in Central and

South America and Southern Africa. Central to the programme are participatory approaches throughout the entire cooperation process .

In Latin America the programme focuses on the origins and dynamics of social movements in Nicaragua (women's movement), Guatemala (indigenous movement and mining), Costa Rica (anti-free trade movement) and Peru (LGBT networks/movement). Specific interest lies in exploring the role of external support to these movements.

The theme of the Southern Africa Programme is 'Civic action for responsive governance', focusing on the relatively new role of civil society organisations to lobby and demand their government for democratic rights and a fair distribution of resources and services. Various forms of protests, actions, lobby and advocacy work have been studied in South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

Key partners:

- The Institute of Social Studies (ISS; The Netherlands)
- Hivos

Key staff:
Ria Brouwers – Researcher, ISS
Kees Biekart – Researcher, ISS
Rosalba Icaza – Researcher, ISS
Jeff Handmaker – Researcher, ISS
Marlieke Kieboom – Research Officer, ISS
Remko Berkhout – Knowledge Officer, Hivos
José Manuel Valverde – Liaison Officer, Hivos
Regional Office Costa Rica

Promoting Pluralism (PP)

This programme is a collaboration of several academic institutions and civil society organisations which have joined forces out of a shared concern about increasing intolerance in various parts of the world. In several countries where Hivos works, such as India, Indonesia and Uganda, partners in civil society signal a rise of fundamentalisms of various sorts. But also in the Netherlands national identity and openness to non-Western foreigners are heavily debated.

Fundamentalisms can be rooted in religion, ethnic affiliation, nationalism, social class or other value systems. Three questions have triggered the set-up of the programme:

1. How can we understand the appeal of fundamentalisms in the selected regions and what is their impact on civil society?
2. What are the conditions under which pluralism is most likely to develop and flourish?
3. How can civil society organisations successfully promote pluralism in practice?

Key partners:

The programme is coordinated by Hivos and the Kosmopolis Institute of the University for Humanistics in the Netherlands, in cooperation with:

- Centre for the Study of Culture and Society (CSCS; Bangalore, India)
- Center for Religious and Cross Cultural Studies (CRCS; Yogyakarta, Indonesia)
- Cross-Cultural Foundation of Uganda (CCFU; Kampala, Uganda)
- Hivos

In all three countries, mixed teams of researchers and practitioners determine the agenda and scope of the programme. In Indonesia, focus lies on religious pluralism and developing, among others, a concept based on civic reason that can help to overcome polarisation. The programme in Uganda generates knowledge on, among others, intra- and inter ethnic differences and aims to reconfigure debates on

governance and diversity, especially with a view to upcoming elections. The India programme consists of initiatives in Gujarat, Karnataka, Bihar, Kerala, Tamilnadu and Goa which aim at rethinking human rights, pluralism and the secular state as well as faith and diversity.

Key staff:

Caroline Suransky – Co-Chair, Kosmopolis
Henk Manschot – Coordinator International Consultation, Kosmopolis
Ute Seela – Co-Chair, Knowledge Officer Hivos
Emily Drani – Coordinator Uganda
Ram Kakarala – Coordinator India
Zainal Abidin Bagir – Coordinator Indonesia

Civil Society in West Asia (WA)

In 2008 Hivos and the Amsterdam Institute for Social science Research (AISSR) of the University of Amsterdam started the Knowledge Programme on Civil Society in West Asia. Its purpose is to generate and integrate knowledge on the roles and opportunities for civil society actors (CSAs) in democratisation processes in politically challenging environments. Both this challenging environment in which CSAs operate, as well as the recent scepticism towards their instrumental role in social and political change, poses several dilemmas

for CSAs in repressive settings, but also for international organisations that support them.

The knowledge-goals of this programme, which focuses on Iran and Syria, are to acquire insights about what drives civic engagement; to explore and identify the interplay between activities of civil society actors; and to explore and identify the impact and effect of external involvement wit these activities. The WA focuses on two main questions:

1. How can different types of CSAs contribute to various processes of democratisation?
2. To what extent can international actors support CSAs' activities and initiatives in these processes?

The programme wants to create a knowledge network, to produce knowledge, outreach and implementation activities of the programme's results, and increased CSA capacities to implement strategies, to participate in knowledge activities and practitioner-academic collaborations.

Key partners:

- The Amsterdam Institute for Social science Research (AISSR; The Netherlands)
- Hivos

Key staff:
Juliette Verhoeven – Coordinator, AISSR
Lisalette Dijkers – Project Assistent, AISSR
Gerd Junne – Academic Coordinator, AISSR
Paul Aarts – Academic Coordinator, AISSR
Kawa Hassan – Knowledge Officer, Hivos

Small Producer Agency in the Globalised Market (SP)

The small-scale producer markets comprise traditional food and fibre commodities, but also new markets for quality products, biodiversity conservation, and mitigation of climate change. Increasing volatility and stringent requirements in these markets, as well as international trade agreements, present smallholders and their organisations with multiple opportunities and risks. Higher value has to be weighed against the costs of meeting international standards and certification for quality products and the imbalance of market power when trading with large companies. Imports can push small producers out of their home markets.

The Knowledge Programme Small Producer Agency in the Globalised Market sets out to map, elicit and integrate knowledge on the dilemmas confronting small-scale producers in global, regional and national

markets. The programme got underway in 2009 with the establishment of a global peer-to-peer Learning Network of farmer organisations, agribusiness, academia and NGOs, led from Bolivia by International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) fellow Diego Muñoz of Mainumby Ñakurutú.

Regional roundtable discussions have since taken place in Latin America, Africa and Asia. In April 2010 the network met near Geneva to debate the issues relevant to small-scale producers in globalised markets looking ahead, in the next twenty years. They identified some of the knowledge gaps that need to be addressed to enable small-scale producers to position themselves and make informed choices. They established multi-stakeholder working groups and agreed a plan of action to take the Learning Network forward.

IIED, Hivos and collaborating institutions are also organising a travelling series of 'Provocative Seminars' to take a more careful look at the assumptions, impacts, evidence, benefits and risks of the approach to "making markets work" for small-scale farmers. The aim is to provoke constructive debate by focusing new knowledge and insights onto this development dilemma. Between September 2010 and September 2011, up to seven 'Provocations' will take place in European cities. Seminar will gather invited provokers,

local participants, and international participants via web streaming, for three hours of debate in English and Spanish. The first provocation will be held back-to-back with the 'Knowledge&Change dialogue'.

Key partners:

- The International Institute of Environment and Development (IIED; United Kingdom)
- Mainumby (Bolivia)
- Hivos

Key staff:

Bill Vorley - Reseacher, IIED
Ethel del Pozo - Coordinator, IIED
Diego Muñoz - Coordinator Learning Network, Mainumby
Bishwadeep Ghose - Knowledge Officer, Hivos Regional Office India

Digital Natives with a Cause? (DN)

The Digital Natives with a Cause? Knowledge Programme started in 2009 together with the Centre for Internet and Society (CIS) in Bangalore. Societies are transforming into true information societies, largely facilitated by the rapid introduction

of technology, affecting people's every day live. However, we do
not know what the effects are and if the power imbalances will change in developing countries if the transformation into information societies really gathers pace, as result of, say, the rise of mobile technology? Are young people then an entry point for bridging technology and engagement together? And how can civil society actors such as Hivos support work with young citizens who are inherently drivers of social change?

Because there is a lack of knowledge in addressing these pivotal questions, Hivos and CIS have assessed the state of knowledge on the potential impact of youth for social transformation and political engagement in the South. This in order to get a better grip on the interfaces between development and use of ICT, civil society actors, and youth. In particular we want to develop insights into the potential impact of youth as e-agents of change on the livelihoods on marginalised people in the South (both urban and rural).

The report 'Digital Natives with a Cause?' charts scholarships and practices of youth and technology and informs further research and intervention within diverse context and cultures. It displays that digital natives have a potential impact as agents of change.

Youth are willing to make a difference by using ICT for engagement. Engagement with youth should focus on their development as responsible and active citizens rather then their digital interests.

It also showed that to identify the relevant knowledge gaps, create new insights and go in a dialogue about these questions, we should give Digital Natives a voice. At the moment all dialogue and knowledge is about them, however they should be included in the discussion. Therefore we are arranging series workshops where digital natives are brought together in peer-to-peer sessions where they learn how to document and reflect on their practices. The first workshop was just held in Taipei with participants from 16 Asian countries. For insight into the workshop check #digitalnatives on Twitter. At the end of 2010 we are arranging a multi-stakeholder meeting between academia, practice and youth.

Key partners:

- Centre for Internet and Society (CIS; India)
- Hivos

Key staff:

Nishant Shah – Research Director, CIS
Hasina Hassan – Coordinator, CIS
Fieke Jansen – Knowledge Officer, Hivos


SOUTH
ATLANTIC

Interview with

Jackie Dugard

Bio: Jackie Dugard is the Executive Director of the Socio-Economic Rights Institute of South Africa (SERI). Prior to co-founding SERI (in January 2010), Jackie was a Senior Researcher at the Centre for Applied Legal Studies (CALS) at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg between 2004 and 2009.

Jackie's areas of expertise are socio-economic rights, socio-legal studies and access to basic services and justice for the poor. Jackie has a BA (Hons) in African Politics and an LLB from the University of the Witwatersrand; an MPhil in the Sociology and Politics of Development and a PhD in Social and Political Sciences from the University of Cambridge; and an LLM in International Human Rights Law from the University of Essex.

How do you see the gap between academics and practitioners and how do you think that the gap can be bridged?

"There is no big gap between academics and practitioners. To take myself as an example; I am both an academic and an activist, or practitioner. I've never found these two to be so far from each other, as the kind of academics I've been involved with is very much applied. For example, when it comes to questions about upgrading informal settlements there are sets of academics in town planning, in architecture, in physical sciences, as well as in law. That has always been part of the attempt to assist communities to be able to make the best case to pass law settlements.

Another example is when the state has attempted evictions by stating that the ground where people were living wasn't safe. As a response, academics and experts in rock formations have researched the ground to counter these claims. Of course there are many academics are very far removed from what is happening on the ground. But I think that at the level of activism there is quite a great link between the two. At least in the South Africa activist circle, there have always been academics who are very closely aligned and who feed into the exchange of information and who try to focus on applied academic knowledge.

I think knowledge is absolutely essential and that's why

even though I moved away from the university, I can see that strategically it's extremely important to retain that academic link. It's a two-way relationship. We want to gain what we can from academia but we also want input. We want to keep on influencing academia to make sure that it doesn't continue to become corporatised and commercialised; that there is still a strong voice within the academy focused on (social) justice; the role of law in society and law in change. So, this two-way relationship of knowledge – whether from global to local or from academic to practitioner – is absolutely essential. We need to prevent that knowledge just sits around in a journal article; it needs to be used by practitioners as well as by local activists."

How do you think knowledge triggers change?
"Knowledge is, at one level, about teaching, training and empowering; about letting communities know about their lives, about empowering them to deal with interactions with the law or interactions in their daily lives. That kind of knowledge triggers a whole lot of change in the form of people realising that they are able to actually be agents themselves and that they don't have to be passive recipients of state repression. Hence, communities are able to stand up, to proactively respond, to gain what is rightfully theirs. For example: when people are being evicted unlawfully, they are able to stand up to that, to litigate, to fight; when they are

told they can't protest, to know what they can and cannot do. At SERI, in order to be able to do so we need to ground ourselves in a specific community.

So when a community tells us there is a particular problem, first we will do research around that problem and then we will use our advocacy and our litigation to affect change. In this way, through applied research, knowledge is directly affecting change in this community, as the research specifically looks for the knowledge gaps. It connects dots and acts, it influences behaviour and practice. For example, if we find there are communities without access to water, we find what the history has been, what the frameworks are, what the gaps are, what the obstacles are. And then we would either try to engage government directly or litigate."

What does your local way of dealing with problems mean for global problems? Is knowledge a panacea that can be spread all over the world and then can get copied in other similar situations, with other similar problems?

"Poverty and exclusion are global symptoms of the globalised system of capitalism. I think we are all connected to global problems. We are both producers and recipients of knowledge, and it floats back and forth along this globalised path. Through knowledge

sharing we can understand what is happening in other countries, so it is extremely important. Nonetheless, there is a very specific need to translate the global lessons into the local context. It requires one to filter the global message through a local lens.

For example, one of the major movements here – the Anti-Privatisation Forum – is struggling with that translation. Although this movement is part of a global discourse that campaigns against privatisation, they haven't always been able to effectively translate the message across to local communities.

As a result, in the South African scenario, when people have a problem with water service delivery, their problem is not with multinational water companies or with private local companies (there is almost no water privatisation in South Africa – largely the result of effective [and internationally supported] campaigns), their problem is actually with corporatised public agencies. In other words, we see some mixed messaging going on with this translation from a global message to a local message.

While the global message against the commercialisation of water remains valid, it needs to be filtered through the local reality that we do not have private water companies .The distinction/clarification is important

because it has political meaning – people should understand that water delivery is in the hands of government and they cannot blame MNCs or private companies for problems, they should hold governments accountable. We need to work at connecting global information with local realities, to make it optimally relevant."

Interview and editing by Frederique Demeijer and Marlieke Kieboom

Publication

Mobilising Social Justice in South Africa

Perspectives from Researchers and Practitioners

In November 2009, activists, NGO practitioners and academics, met at the Chalsty Centre of the University of Witwatersrand, to reflect on civic mobilisation for social justice. Five research projects led by a group of researchers that naturally straddle the academic-practitioner divide, formed the backbone of the conference. Through different lenses, these projects have analysed the dynamics of civic strategies for change, and have served as the basis for a wide range of discussions and workshops.

South Africa, often labelled as 'the world in one country' provides a fertile and suitable context for reflection on these issues. Its history of civic action is still very evident. The country's broad-based civic struggle against apartheid serves as a point of reference for social movements the world over.

But there is also much to learn by observing and analysing the struggle of civic actors to position themselves in relation to the state and South Africa's development challenges in the period after 1994. The conference dealt with a variety of topics, ranging from the question of how citizens can influence state policy and parliamentary actions, to explaining the underlying interests behind community efforts to advocate for rights to basic services and freedom of expression. This book provides an account of the

research findings, and some of the key conclusions and questions that emerged. It includes the research papers, workshop discussions and contributions by prominent guest speakers.

The book adds to a growing body of critical voices that call upon civil society organisations, and their donors, to become more self-critical and reflective, more analytical and strategic. Good intentions, commitment and the moral high ground of civic action, while crucial, are insufficient on their own. Civic action requires resolve and strategic responses. The findings of the research projects suggest that the strategies of donors and the organisations they support should be far more knowledge-based than they are at present. Such strategies may indeed hold the key to deeper insights, especially if further research can strengthen grass-roots perspectives and citizen narratives.

While the 'Knowledge & Change dialogue' and this book mark an important milestone for the Hivos/ISS Civil Society Buiding Programme, we feel that our dialogue is just beginning. In many ways, the Knowledge Programme has been a process of 'weaving': weaving past with present, academics with activists, personal insights with sectoral perspectives, and identities and experiences. And now, we would like to use the dialogue to weave some of our findings with

the insights emerging from the other Hivos Knowledge Programmes and the experiences of other conference participants.

Remko Berkhout (Hivos)

> Social activism against Tratado Libre Comercio (TLC), Costa Rica, 2007. Photo: Oscar Jara


Fuera Fil

Essay by Ria Brouwers

Knowledge for a change

You know what? There is a new buzzword in the international aid language. Since aid began half a century ago, with goals of modernisation and growth, key words have come and gone. Remember the ideas of distribution and basic needs in the 1970s, equality and emancipation in the 1980s, joined by gender mainstreaming, poverty reduction, social capital. Not to forget participation, good governance, ownership and aid harmonisation. Each new term comes with the promise of a more sophisticated understanding of how aid works. So, civil society building and advocacy are seen to be far superior to conventional service delivery, and aid effectiveness is bound to increase if governments show leadership and take ownership of their development. There is a strong belief that the results of aid will improve with the new jargon.

And now the buzzword is 'knowledge'. Like many of the previous magic bullets the meaning of knowledge is quite open. Not uncommon in politics and policy-making, as my professor of political science explained long ago, the wider the concept the more people get together under the same banner. It comes with a price, because a lack of specification leads to a perfect babel, as we have experienced in the Knowledge Programme. Without a differentiation of the perspectives of knowledge, its generation and its application, a 'knowledge' discussion is likely to be highly confusing since we use the same words

for different things. In this piece I will unpack the word 'knowledge' from my perspective, in an effort to make clear my expectations of the Knowledge Programme, and to counter-balance doubts about this new hype in the development sector. I do the unpacking around the questions: what knowledge, whose knowledge, knowledge for what?

What knowledge?

Starting point is that the knowledge we deal with in the Knowledge Programme is about social development, where disciplines of economics, social and political sciences, anthropology and some psychology come in, and of course management knowledge and organisational theory. It is knowledge about how people shape their lives, how they interact, relate to each other, govern themselves and behave. When we say 'knowledge' we are not talking about knowledge in the physical, chemical or medical sciences, not knowledge for the automobile industry, nano- or space technology. We deal with knowledge about power, beliefs, rights and relationships.

Whose knowledge?

The actors generating and sharing knowledge are a colourful batch. An initial idea of the Knowledge Programme on Civil Society Building was to open up the treasure house of Hivos. Staff and partners were

thought to have a wealth of knowledge from experiences, but most of it remained hidden so that knowledge available within the organisation did not accumulate and people were not learning from each other. The KP was to be a space to uncover the treasures and to turn these into useful lessons for future Hivos work.

A widely accepted idea in the CSB KP is that knowledge should be generated by people who live the situation that is to be "known". They are in the best position to uncover the dynamics of civil society processes of which they are part. Localised knowledge is the most useful for development in a given situation, while the engagement in knowledge generation empowers those involved. So, not only does this approach promise to engender good knowledge, equally valued is the transformatory potential of the process. Here, knowledge = change.

An essential feature of the KP is that practice-oriented knowledge producers are joined by academics from universities or research institutes. It was expected that researchers in the South might be difficult to find, research being so low on the priority list in many developing countries. The fear has been proven right, be it that the experiences in Central America differ widely from those in Southern Africa. But, with an

international community of students in development studies, the ISS is a breeding ground for researchers worldwide. Students have become a major asset of the KP, some 15 received a small grant to conduct fieldwork for their MA thesis. Their studies have become important parts of the KP, see the Working paper series.

So there it is: knowledge and actors, producing and sharing. But what for? What's the use? How does knowledge work?

Knowledge for what?

Carol Weiss (1986) has written an insightful article about the many meanings of utilisation of research for policy making. Three of those meanings may help our quest of the use of knowledge in international development processes.

A plausible meaning is of research being used for problem-solving, The connotation here is of a linear process that goes as follows: there is a problem, researchers set out to collect information and analyse the data, the knowledge thus acquired is documented, reported and applied. Problem solved. This instrumental and action-oriented perspective on knowledge is the sociologist's dream, but Weiss warns that the expectation that knowledge thus generated forms the basis for decision-making is "wildly optimistic".

Then there is the political utilisation of research, where knowledge is used to back-up decisions that have already been taken, or that are certain to be taken because they suit the interests of those in power to decide. In this case, knowledge is used as ammunition to support ideologies, assumptions or pre-set positions. This may sound like a stupid application of knowledge, perverse and mischievous, but coming to think of it, the political use of knowledge is a very common category in social and political life. A notorious example is the research that the US government commissioned to discover the nuclear weapons in Iraq, but I'm sure we all have examples of research and evaluation studies legitimising support to organisations or activities that serve the interests of few and will solve no development problems whatsoever.

The third meaning of utilisation of knowledge that I draw from Weiss, is use through a process called Enlightenment. It refers to knowledge that sinks in gradually, that broadens the horizon, serves as part of a puzzle, 'creeping knowledge'. Not the findings of a single study, not even of a body of related studies directly affect policy, rather the imagery is of a social science knowledge "percolating through informed publics and coming to shape the way in which people think about social issues". Knowledge that challenges current truths may work its way into public

consciousness and overturn accustomed values and patterns of thought. Actually, the notion of research utilisation in the Enlightenment mode has a comforting quality. It seems to promise that gradually the light will break through.

For a change

The aid industry operates in the problem-solving mood. Driven by the pressure to spend money and to show results, it aims to find quick fixes for complex problems, or works with solutions drawn from completely different situations, ironically called 'good practices'. The pressure and standardisation also calls for research that can be used in the political mode, the objective being to show that aid works. Should we have to conclude that it doesn't work, we are at least expected to find another buzzword that will keep the spell alive. It will come as no surprise that my expectations of the knowledge hype are surrounded by hesitations. There is one ray of hope. If the KP could start a process of Enlightenment in South and North, as a counterweight to the quick fixes of the problem-solving use of knowledge and the false promises of the political mode, then it may be worthwhile to jump on the bandwagon. With that in mind, let's try knowledge for a change.

Ria Brouwers (Institute of Social Studies)

Interview with

David Zac Niringiye

The Rt. Rev. Dr David Zac Niringiye, bishop of All Saints Cathedral in Kampala, talks to Ute Seela about diversity and common ground in Uganda

Debating pluralism – perspective of a Ugandan bishop

The Pluralism Knowledge Programme serves, among others, as a platform to discuss diverging experiences of and views on diversity and pluralism. The following conversation can be found in full length at the open Democracy online forum 'Religion, Gender and Politics'.[1]

Bishop Niringiye, you have recently spoken at the conference 'Pluralism: the lived realities of managing diversity in Uganda'. Can you explain briefly how you understand pluralism?

"I would like to distinguish 'plurality' and 'pluralism'. Both terms are derived from the word 'plural', meaning 'many' or 'diversity'. It has to do with identity, and its reflections in behaviour, lifestyle and expressions. While 'plurality' is a fact of life – we are different, be it as tribes or followers of different religions – pluralism is a doctrine. Pluralism is about the appreciation of the difference without the acknowledgement that there are common norms. In Western culture this especially expresses itself in the whole idea of sexuality. Pluralism allows people to express their difference – no matter what."

You are saying 'pluralism is freedom of choice without boundaries'. However, in my country, individual freedoms are not absolute. For instance, freedom of expression is limited by the obligation not to incite violence.

"This definition of pluralism is not my own. The roots of the concept need to be sought in the 16th and 17th century European Enlightenment period, in the era of Descartes and Nietzsche. In the thinking of Descartes everything is derived from 'who I am'. He said 'I think, therefore I am'. All you are, your identity, is within you, it is a matter of choice. What I disagree with is this understanding of 'what we are'. I think the reason why Europe cannot cope with its Muslims is because the pluralism based on the individual has become a dogma. It only works as long as societies are rather homogenous. Europe has big troubles applying the same pluralism to the choice of women (be it an individual choice or a collective norm) to wear the veil."

You introduced an alternative concept: celebrating plurality. How does this concept differ from pluralism?

"Let me first turn to what I consider the other 'extreme': tribalism. Tribalism is the notion that 'what we know, what we believe, becomes the standard'. And the critical question here is 'who is the we'. It has to do with our identity, with both fact and belief. But it need

not necessarily be blood relations. We could also talk of a tribalism of religion or a tribalism of economics. The trend one can observe is that when people of diverse tribes live together but cannot agree on common norms, they separate the entities.

We have a history of tribalism in Uganda. Ugandan politics, how Ugandan political parties work, is through the identification of a particular group in which they can exercise the politics of patronage. But tribalism is not an African phenomenon. The very idea of the nation state, as it has emerged in Europe, is a construction that is build on tribalism. Most European states consist of one homogeneous tribe. Those few who do not, are federal states that allow differing degrees of autonomy to the different tribes, and thereby enable separation.

Silently, separation is also a proposal in our country. It is this contrast of tribalism and pluralism that I want to point out. In a tribalist system we think that our norms, behaviours and standards must be those of everyone else. In pluralism, there are no norms, pluralism does not distinguish between 'right' and 'wrong'. The point I am trying to make is that we need to celebrate our plurality. We must accept plurality as fact and as gift. But in order to celebrate we need to dance to the same tune. The challenge we face is identifying the common ground, our shared values, or shared identity."

Maybe the question is 'who defines the boundaries?' Are they a given or do they belong to the territory of ideology, of ideas, which a society needs to debate?
"Boundaries are certainly not a given, it is the encounter that matters, the meeting of the differences. Only then can we find the common ground. And when we have found it, we must realise that the tune is not owned by anyone. We need to think about institutions that promote encounter and relationship, legal processes that seek to create space so that everything thrives because there are common norms."

[1] http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/religion-gender-politics, an collaboration initiated by the Pluralism Knowledge Programme.

< Kampala, Uganda, 2008
Photo: U. Seela

Essay by Shobha Raghuram and
Ratnakar Tripathy

Knowledge and the Politics of Social Change: The Inseparability of Practices

Introduction

Development work remains a complex area of mediation between people in completely different locations and contexts of existential conditions such as exclusion, poverty and loss of rights. Great distances emerge between people who live in extreme conditions and are often absent from the discourse on injustice and inequality, and those who live in the world of knowledge and mere approximations of such extremity. Are there approaches that reduce this distance? Many of civil society's development efforts from 'above' seem oblivious to already existing development aspirations from 'below'. Development 'ideas' must be connected with development 'aspirations' on the ground.

Encountering Theories and Social Change Practices: Overcoming Paralysis, Triggering Emancipation

Despite the apparent inclusivity of development discourse, many subtle and some obvious fissures exist. At issue is recognising people's knowledge, contained, for example, in their oral traditions and cultures, and admitting the insufficient will among social scientists, development institutions and government development machinery to accord value to it. Despite extraordinary advances in civilisational knowledge, technology, science and engineering, two billion citizens live in dire circumstances.

We must examine the ruptures between political practice and enlightened public action. The roles of the intellectual in civil movements and of institutions, including government, must be redefined in order for governments to involve academia and NGOs in the wider scope of socially responsible political action. The veneer of 'neutrality' as a necessary methodological principle is responsible for widening the divide between theory and practice in the struggle to create equal societies. Simultaneously, government, public and market reluctance to support politically committed writers and universities has been a major factor in weakening the collectivisation of social power. As a principle, assumptions on all sides need to be discussed in order to return to the political terrain where theory and practice necessarily cohere to undo the domination of unacceptable moralities. In short, democratic conditions of participation are required to translate theory into action. Government should engage its citizens in never-ending dialogue concerning its current and future policies.

Conclusion: Knowledge of the Affected

If it is true that a democratic system inherently aims to implement enlightened public will, the process of 'citizenship engagement' requires the public to be the best source of information on what it wishes to implement. It would also seem that an expert's

construct of public will should be steeped in what the public says. Abstractions plucked out of the sky do not help when defining a simple word like poverty seems riddled with problems of unimaginable complexity. In public governance, how often have we asked the 'poor' what they mean by poverty or wealth? Is it regarded as an immoral question? Or is it only the wealthy or the wise who must define poverty?

Development thus acquires greater urgency in contexts where democratisation is not perceived as a luxury but as a struggle for daily survival. We may be able to guide and assist the development process, ensuring better results, but only if we ourselves are guided by the first-hand wishes, knowledge and self-assessed needs of the affected peoples.

Shobha Raghuram (Independent Consultant) and Ratnakar Tripathy (Asian Development Research Institute)

Insights of the Knowledge Programme Civil Society in West Asia

It emerges from the findings of this Knowledge Programme that civic activists in West Asia operate in a complex and complicated authoritarian context that constraints their margins of manoeuvre. It is paramount to place democratisation support through civil society in the wider historical, regional and global perspectives and look into *internal and external structural factors that sustain authoritarianism and not civil society* as explanatory variables for the 'democratic deficit' of the region.

These factors are *oil (and related rents) and patrimonial networks, international (Western) support to authoritarian regimes , international competition, structural heterogeneity (ethnic, religious, sectarian), (perceived or real) outside threats, and cultural factors (patriarchy).* These factors are interdependent and intertwined.

Taken together, they form an '*(un)holy alliance', 'toxic mixture', and 'deadly cocktail'* that endures regime resilience and constraints contours of civic and political activism. Civil society-state dynamics are ambiguous and social actors have a rather ambivalent relation to the state. In such an authoritarian context, liberal notions of and correlation between civil society and democratisation doesn't reflect regional realities.

The conclusion is to de-couple civil society and democratisation, re-couple civic activism with the context, have a neutral conceptualisation of civil society (civil society is good for its own sake, whatever and wherever it may lead to), tone down democratisation discourse, and as international actors employ a sobering support strategy that takes into account the geo-politics and authoritarian context in which civil society operates.

Kawa Hassan (Hivos)

< Workshop with Central American partners in Guatemala, August 2009, Civil Society Building Knowledge Programme.

Essay by José Roberto Morales

Mayan knowledge as an alternative for change

Guatemala has a multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic society. Mayan communities and peoples form more than 60% of the 13 million population and have a thousand-year old written and oral legacy of knowledge that has been passed down from generation to generation. Since 1524, the Mayan peoples have suffered invasion and the imposition of a colonial, racist, exclusive, patriarchal and genocidal state that has worked with national and transnational capital to threaten them and Mother Earth with death.

They are now fighting back and demanding collective rights over their territories and natural resources. However, these demands are inspired by reference to the rich heritage of knowledge and wisdom accumulated over centuries.

Mayan knowledge and wisdom is set out in many books and codices, including Popol Vuh. This book codifies social, cultural, economic, political, spiritual and artistic knowledge and expresses the cosmovision of the Mayan people, which emphasises the principles of harmony and balance and living together in peace. Modern times have brought development, industrialisation and automation but have resulted in planetary imbalances and global warming. Popol Vuh's exposition of Mayan wisdom, values, codes of conduct and the search for harmony and balance is therefore

relevant today in view of the need for harmony between humanity and nature if the very destruction of the planet is to be avoided.

The current crisis of paradigms may be a good moment to review this expression of Mayan spirituality. The Mayan cosmovision is very old but is vibrant and expresses universal values such as cooperation, community, peace, justice and the complementary nature of beings, all of which are important for the spiritual and material transformation of all inhabitants of Mother Earth.

Jose Roberto Morales (Centro de Acción Legal en Derechos Humanos)

< Civil Society Building Knowledge Programme contributed to a Dialogue held by its partner 'Programa Democracia y Transformacion Global', Lima Peru, May 2010

Personal reflections by Remko Berkhout

Knowledge as package or knowledge as process

Ten years ago, I started out in the development sector as a gung-ho volunteer, freshly drafted from the corporate sector, heading south to train local NGOs.[1] I knew a little bit about project- and change management, to my naïve mind and the latest aid-fashion back then, clearly the kind of skills that needed to be transferred to the developing world as essential ingredients for civilisation and material progress.

Working through my preparatory readings, I came across Allan Kaplan's 'The development of capacity'. In this piece, Kaplan contrasts development-as-modernisation and its mechanistic intervention approaches with the more organic concept of development as an ongoing process of evolving consciousness, which demands deep reading and subtle facilitation by the development practitioner. This was way beyond me then. The seeming backwardness of the context I had landed in confirmed the need for some structured strategic systemic action, the kind of action by someone like myself, born and bred in Rotterdam, where, so the saying goes, "the shirts are sold with the sleeves already rolled up".

In the years that followed, I learned the hard way to appreciate more organic approaches and conceptions of development, packaged in contemporary debates like

approaches of complexity (Fowler, 2008) and relational practice (Eyben, 2010). In the development sector at large however, the modernisation myth still manages to fend off alternatives and mechanistic approaches stubbornly prevail. For example, both are pillars of preference in a recently published report by the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) on the future of aid in the Netherlands.

The same pattern seems to be at work in what James Taylor (2009, p.1) calls a 'burgeoning knowledge industry' in the development sector. From the Worldbank wanting to become a 'knowledge partner in development' to alternative social movements like the Zapatistas propagating the importance of and respect for 'other knowledges', everybody seems to be parading with 'knowledge' these days. However, it seems clear that a confluence of different conceptions is at work in which instrumental and mechanistic approaches dominate.

The aforementioned WRR report is a case in point. It readily acknowledges the importance of knowledge for a more professional diagnostic approach to development. Like doctors attending a patient, development actors need in depth knowledge and analytical capacity to assess the barriers to modernisation of a poor country. Insufficient progress

to date, so the story line goes, implies that this knowledge has been inadequate. Therefore, the report recommends to beef-up investments in knowledge development, including partnerships that bring different actors from across different disciplines together as a means to come up with new recipes for new interventions, new (technical) fixes. This approach sees knowledge as a package, to be transferred from North to South, as a means to contribute to development, defined as 'accelerated modernisation'.

In the Hivos Knowledge Programme[2] we have been experimenting with an alternative view that focuses on the process of knowledge development as a developmental end in its own right. We have been elaborating a strategy which we call 'knowledge integration'. We believe that bringing together 'academics' and 'practitioners' from both the global North and the global South, can lead to new insights on some of the bigger questions of our time.

In Central America for example, our partners of the Institute for Social Studies (ISS) in the Hague work together with local researchers to facilitate processes of conversation and participatory exploration between activists, NGO professionals and other development actors to document and analyse the evolution of civil

society organisations and social movements. We take our time and the facilitation of process is allowed to take centre stage. We seek understanding, new common ground and revitalised relationships, not burdened by the need to single out solvable problems, work towards contracts, resource transfers and logframed chains of expected results. The process of knowledge development is our intervention. The emerging insights and relationships arising from this process constitute the bulk of the change we seek to promote. As an immediate result nothing tangible changes and new recipes rarely emerge. Yet, I have been in sessions where the process of dialogue has put the issues at hand in a whole new light, offering new perspectives and avenues for action. This angle on knowledge development shows some stark similarities with new approaches of change management and process facilitation in other sectors such as 'theory U' (Scharmer, 2009) and 'presencing' (Senge et al., 2005)

So what's the upshot here? Much of the increased attention to knowledge for development seems to set its hopes on 'knowledge as package' looking for new recipes for worthy development goals such as poverty alleviation and the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs). But the quest for new magic bullets risks overlooking the value of 'knowledge as process' as a gateway to a more developmental practice in a sector

that urgently needs to let go of the idea that social change can be engineered for the ultimate goal of modernity.

Remko Berkhout (Hivos)

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[1] Many thanks to Ria Brouwers, Marlieke Kieboom and Barbara Plavcak for comments on an earlier version of this article.

[2] For a more detailed description of our strategie see for example Stremmelaar (2009)

Interview with

Diego Muñoz

Bio: Diego Muñoz Elsner is the coordinator of the Global Learning Network on Small Producer Agency in the Globalised Market, part of the Knowledge Programme run by Mainumby in Bolivia, IIED in the UK and Hivos in the Netherlands. He is also an international fellow of the International Institute of Economic Development (IIED) and a researcher-partner and Executive Director of the Centro Mainumby-Ñakurutú. He holds a degree in Agricultural Engineering from Texas A&M University (USA) and a postgraduate qualification in Environmental Management and Planning from the Latin American Environmental Sciences Faculty (FLACAM) in La Plata, Argentina.

How do you define knowledge?

"Everyone, from the moment they are born until the end of their life, is constantly accumulating knowledge. This knowledge evolves based on life experiences, lifestyle and the dedication the person decides to devote – or has the opportunity to devote – to a certain topic or topics in particular. The knowledge may be practical – based on learning (often repeatedly) from everyday life – or abstract, based on collective learning processes structured by various different cultural codes of teaching and learning, depending on cultural characteristics.

Within these codes of more abstract knowledge, over the course of several centuries western culture has developed a code of learning and knowledge that has become 'universal'. However, access to these forms of teaching and learning and these knowledge codes is still forbidden to the majority of the world's population. We are therefore talking about a restricted and elitist knowledge that is still limited to privileged groups in global society.

This differentiation means that 'empirical' knowledge is just as important as 'academic' knowledge, or even more important, because it is the knowledge that the majority of the world's people use and based on which they analyse and take decisions."

How do you see the gap between academics and practitioners? How do you think this gap can be bridged (if at all)?

"Global culture, which has maintained its hegemony for centuries due to western culture, has given priority to academic knowledge and underestimated not just empirical knowledge but also the knowledge that comes from other cultures and other systems and forms of learning. So, anything that didn't come out of academic settings in the most influential western societies was not even considered culture, let alone recognised as knowledge.

This situation has created an increasingly unfavourable environment for knowledge production outside the western viewpoint. It has led western societies to believe that they have the responsibility to solve all of humanity's problems, and that this responsibility falls naturally to them. By the same token, non-western cultures, or individuals and groups who have not had the opportunity to go to university, have been led to believe that they know nothing, and that every solution to humanity's problems must be left in the hands of academics and people who have studied at university. Nevertheless, this viewpoint is increasingly being challenged because, in terms of dealing with the problems humanity is facing today, that western

'scientific' knowledge is less and less trustworthy and more and more responsible for what is happening. The gap can be reduced if there is a significant change of attitude among academics, if they genuinely open up to other types of knowledge and other ways of learning and acquiring knowledge, and if they support people coming from empirical settings to systematise their knowledge, so that each can learn from the other. There needs to be a process of mutual learning, based on different ways of learning."

How does the academic-practitioners relationship hang together with the knowledge exchange?
"There needs to be a change of attitude, especially among academics, to be able to work with people whose knowledge is empirical. That empirical knowledge needs to be systematised to understand how it operates, the purpose of it, and how knowledge production is organised. But, again, my opinion is that academics are the ones who need to change their attitude and enter into a completely different type of relationship with non-academics. There is always an elitist attitude on the part of academics which throws up barriers against practitioners."

How do you think knowledge triggers change?
"Knowledge production must be combined with an idea of what it is for. If the idea of what it is for is unclear, it

will be difficult for that knowledge to trigger change because, in addition to knowledge, you need to develop the instruments required to bring about change. So, right from the start, when you are producing knowledge, you need to think what it is for and to what extent it is going to be useful for change. That is part of knowledge itself, and if that combination of stages in knowledge building is lacking, the knowledge is not going to be useful for change. Therefore, right from the start of the knowledge production process, you have to think what it is for, what change it aims to bring about, and who it is going to benefit. That's the only way knowledge – as knowledge per se – can trigger change."

How do you relate your work on local realities to global problems?

"All research work, especially on issues linked to public policies, must be connected to and interact with an entity of some sort: this might be a producer organisation, or a public policy in a government ministry, for example. So, our research on small-scale producers, agency, markets and globalisation must be linked to the activities going on in the organisations we will work with. And once you make the link with those organisations, you need to analyse together with them how the work is going to have a more global impact.

In our network, one of the most important thematic elements, theme 1, is the relationship with regional markets or wider markets. So, we need to analyse how the work we are doing in this network can be linked with broader settings, and how to enable the institutions who are participating through the network members to use this information to connect with those more global markets more effectively."

< Muslim Ladies At The Market In Kota Baharu, Malaysia

Essay by Jur Schuurman

Research by and for the people who know what they need

Participatory generation of policy proposals: the way to knowledge that brings about change

There are two important conditions for knowledge to trigger change. First, the envisaged change must respond to needs assessed by the intended beneficiaries themselves. Second, knowledge must be generated in a way that makes acting on it immediate and inevitable. For both conditions, the keyword is organisation.

Not again!

Many readers are no doubt recalling the concepts 'action research' and 'participatory research', thinking, "Not again!" Their reaction is understandable, since those concepts have become worn-out clichés.

But there is a big difference between participatory action research in general and research in the context of a membership organisation. Merely speaking with 'the people', writing up conclusions and presenting a report to those who commissioned it is not likely to spur change. But embedding research in a membership organisation – say, a farmers' union – offers greater possibilities. The union's membership structure provides researchers direct access to the stakeholders – farmers who know their needs. Since organised farmers meet frequently, the conditions are

set for periodic collective consultations that make the collected knowledge more valid and representative. Will this knowledge lead to change? The nature of membership organisations enhances the probability. Created by founding members to pursue goals that individuals cannot attain alone, membership organisations want change. A powerful farmers' union repeatedly proposes and implements changes that benefit the farmers. Doing so on the basis of knowledge generated by its own rank and file, and systematised by embedded researchers, increases the strength and validity of its proposals.

Ecuador

In Ecuador, the farmers' federation National Federation of Indigenous Afro-Ecuatorianos and Peasants (FENOCIN) implemented a consultation process consisting of two-day workshops at the level of 15 second-tier organisations. Central University of Ecuador students were recruited to accompany the realisation of inventories and draft a strategy document that was instrumental in successfully presenting to the government proposals to, for instance, finance education and agricultural development.

The Participatory Generation of Policy Proposals approach (Spanish acronym PIPGA) makes this possible. It offers membership organisations two big assets in

their policy elaboration and negotiations: they will know what the members want, and they will be able to show that they know what the members want. Negotiation partners consider more seriously proposals generated by consultations among organisation members.

Four steps

How does PIPGA work? After (1) well-documented and registered membership consultations, (2) participatory research systematises results and conventional research substantiates proposals that are (3) elaborated into policies and economic plans and (4) successfully negotiated, because they are too convincing to be ignored. Results are shared in follow-up consultations with members – and the cycle begins anew.

Thus, the people that are the organisation have a REAL say. In Brazil, the smallholders federation Fórum Sul created an organic structure that enables the permanent incorporation of consultation processes in the formulation of demands to the government. It has won over many in the government and small farmers are in line to benefit.

Mind you, the PIPGA approach alone is insufficient for knowledge-building. The organisational setting is just as important. A strong membership organisation is the ideal environment for consultations and research, and

for subsequent action that itself makes organisations stronger. This is the best guarantee for the continued generation of knowledge that leads to relevant change.

Jur Schuurman (Agriterra)

Essay by Jan Breman

Ongoing poverty and the informalisation of the economy

In my nearly 50 years of anthropological fieldwork, mainly in India, I have found ample evidence that people in the lower echelons of society and the economy have not made much progress in their work and living conditions. My findings in Gujarat, one of the leading states in the booming economy, match those of a national commission charged to map the landscape of the informal economy, the huge and unregulated sector on which the great majority of India's workforce depends. The commission reports that growth has benefited merely a quarter of the population, a segment which was already somewhat or even much better off, while three-quarters have to make do with 20 rupees per day.

Inequality is increasing between the haves and have-nots, owing to an informal sector economy which in the lower echelons has cheap labour as its organising principle. The extremely low wage level is compounded by employment modalities based on casual work in an endless rotation of hire and fire, a working day-night which according to the need of the moment can be lengthened or shortened and is characterised by piece-rated rather than time-rated payment and a preponderance of own-account work. Self-employment often tends to retrogress into self-exploitation, leading to excessive work hours and the cooptation of young children and old adults in the labour process.

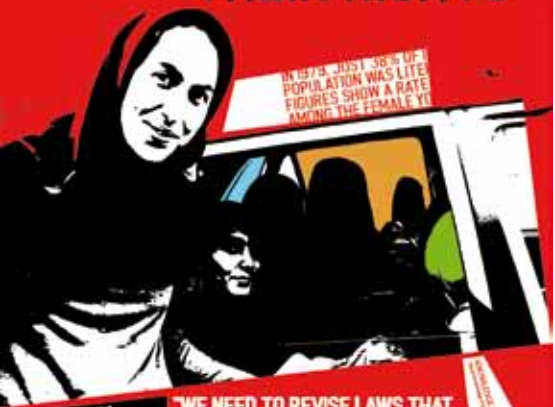
The informal economy was born in part of peasants and landless labourers who were pushed out of agriculture and sought work in cities. Wishful thinking held that once these migrants became more skilled, their labour price would rise and lead to their inclusion in the formal sector. This has not materialised. Instead of a formalisation of labour relationships, employment dynamics have gone in the opposite direction, resulting in an informal economy comprising 93% of the total Indian workforce.

Informalisation of employment dominates where relatively closed economies have been transformed into open ones. It has ended the role of government as the protector of the common interest. In many instances state authority seems now to have full and unconditional faith in the unfettered operation of the market. This growth model has become the agenda for managing the globalised order. Western economies have adopted major features of this model, as exemplified by 'self-employment', wage flexibilisation, working more hours and for more years, withdrawing protection against dismissal, and reducing expenditure on social care and security. Although the hegemony of market fundamentalism may have led to the erosion of the European welfare state, it appears to have remained intact in a toned down format owing to a societal framework in which the built-up equilibrium between

labour and capital has become solidified in an institutional setting which is absent in the world's low-income zones of unemancipated working classes. The congested and fragmented mass of labour at the bottom of the informal sector in India is not organised into trade unions and is made up of underclasses without political representation. Our Hivos/AISSR/CDS project 'The Long Road to Social Security: Assessing and Monitoring the Implementation of Social Security for the Working Poor in India's Informal Economy project' aims to investigate the impact of social security benefits introduced in India in recent years.

Jan Breman (University of Amsterdam)

WOMEN DEMANDING THEIR RIGHTS



IN 1979, JUST 36% OF IRAN'S FEMALE POPULATION WAS LITERATE. TODAY, UNICEF FIGURES SHOW A RATE OF 97% LITERACY AMONG THE FEMALE YOUTH OF IRAN.

IN 2008, 64% OF THOSE ENTERING UNIVERSITY WERE WOMEN.

IRANIAN WOMEN MAKE UP JUST 23% OF THE LABOR FORCE. THE WORLD AVERAGE IS 40%.

"WE NEED TO REVISE LAWS THAT TREAT WOMEN UNEQUALLY!"

Zahra Rahnavard speaking at a campaign rally

As a result of the growing discourse on women's rights and the non-violent acts of protest to demand equal rights, the candidates were forced to address the issues of women. **For the first time in the thirty years since the revolution, wives of the candidates took on a visible role in the campaign.** Zahra Rahnavard, wife of the Reformist candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi and Fatemeh Karroubi, wife of the cleric and candidate Mehdi Karroubi, actively campaigned for their husbands, demanding an end to laws that justified discrimination against women.

2009-2010
A YEAR IN IRAN: CHANGE HAS NOT COME TO AN END

< Ashtary Design

Photo exhibition

Knowledge and Change: A Year in Iran

The exhibition, A Year in Iran, looks at changes in Iranian society through the lens of the contested 2009 presidential election. It uses graphic panels that tell the story with images, quotes, and text.

The election and its aftermath exposed shifts in the political and social structure of the nation. In particular, it revealed schisms between Iran's increasingly liberal society and its rulers and divisions among even the most conservative politicians and the administration of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

After the June 12, 2009 presidential election in Iran, the hashtag iranelection was the number one tag on Twitter for weeks. The whole world was watching events in Iran, intoxicated by the demonstrations against the election results and by the use of new media to communicate events to the world. When the foreign media was warned off of reporting and asked to leave the country, mobile phones, twitter, and facebook became vehicles for protesters to use to keep the outside world engaged with their cause.

What was hidden to the outside world, was now visible. Changes the nation had been experiencing for years were now public and open – not simply to outsiders, but to insiders as well. "I thought I was the minority and that I would just have to learn to live with

oppression," a young Iranian professional said about the protests following the announcement of the election results. "Now I know that I am part of the majority, and I feel responsible for a better Iran."

As a result of the growing discourse on women's rights and the non-violent acts of protest to demand equal rights, the candidates were forced to address the issues of women. For the first time in the thirty years since the revolution, wives of the candidates took on a visible role in the campaign. Zahra Rahnavard, wife of the Reformist candidate Mir Hossein Mousavi and Fatemeh Karroubi, wife of the cleric and candidate Mehdi Karroubi, actively campaigned for their husbands, demanding an end to laws that justified discrimination against women.

The elections, and the unrest that followed, accelerated and highlighted policies targeting civil society. The Ahmadinejad administration actively sought to erode civil society, fearing the loss of control that would result from its vibrance. His administration forced academics into retirement, instituted a rating system for politically and socially active students that often resulted in an end to their university studies, stepped up pressure on trade unions with arrests and violence, and systematically sought to replace all independent civil society activities with their own state-controlled versions.

The elections also uncovered long-standing divisions among Iran's ruling elite. It became clear that the regime was anything but unified. Reformists, in particular, were singled out for persecution. Those who worked to reform the system were not simply a different flavor of the regime's rule, but its enemy. Many prominent reformists, including the vice president during the term of reformist president Mohammad Khatami, Mohammad Ali Abtahi, were arrested, beaten, drugged, and forced to make false confessions. Some were quickly released; others, like Abtahi, found themselves in front of television cameras, stars of the regime's post-election show trials.

Issues that had been playing out on the domestic stage for years were suddenly and dramatically brought to the attention of the world by the election and its aftermath. The secret changes taking place in families all over Iran were now manifesting on the streets. Iran's youth publicly demanded a voice in the rule of their country. Women demanded their rights. Whatever happens next, the changes revealed by the election are still very much at play in Iranian society. Change has not come to an end.

Kamran Ashtary and Tori Egherman (Ashtary Design)

"I was somewhat surprised because I thought Press TV would at least pretend to have some credibility and wouldn't come and interview a prisoner in an interrogation room when I was under duress."

Maziar Bahari, the Newsweek journalist who spent 118 days in prison in Iran, 107 in solitary confinement.

Shahab Mousavat, tells BBC radio that early in the campaign season Iran's English language news service Press TV was given instructions limiting their editorial freedom:

"We were told that we had to tone down anything that might be construed as supportive of Mr. Mousavi or any of those who were standing in opposition to Mr. Ahmadinejad. As we went forward it became even more apparent that really the editorial freedoms that we enjoyed – unprecedented in Iran – were going to be done away with."

THE WORLD'S BIGGEST PRISON FOR JOURNALISTS

In 2009 and 2010, Reporters Without Borders reported that there were more journalists in prison in the Islamic Republic of Iran than anywhere else in the world.

2009-2012: A YEAR IN IRAN: CHANGE HAS NOT COME TO AN END

< Ashtary Design

Interview with

Nishant Shah

Bio: Nishant Shah is the Research Director at the Centre for Internet & Society (CIS), Bangalore. Prior to CIS Nishant worked as an information architect with Yahoo, Partecs and Khoj Studios, was a Research Analyst for Comat Technologies and designed and taught several courses and workshops on the aesthetics and Politics of New Digital Media, for undergraduate and graduate level students in different universities around the world.

Nishant has done his Ph.D. doctoral work at the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore. At CIS Nishant manages a portfolio of multi-disciplinary projects on Histories of the Internet, Wikipedia and the Critical Point of View, Technology mediated education, Digital Archives and Memories, and e-Governance. Nishant currently collaborates with Hivos to explore Digital Natives and the potentials for social transformation and political participation in developing countries in the Global South.

How do you define knowledge?
"This is an important but loaded question. Knowledge seems an abstract concept, but it is in itself a practice and part of everyday life. Knowledge is consciously produced and consumed. It is a multistakeholder construction of the consumer and producer. An example: the notion of time. We are born into time, we are informed of what we are in time. We internalise it as such that we don't realise the notion of time consciously. But even though time permeates our lives, it is very difficult to say what time is. Who defines what time is, how you experience it and how time can regulate your practice? If you ask someone what time is, they will look at their watch and say it's 18.00. The same holds for knowledge."

How do you see the gap between academics and practitioners and can the gap be bridged?
"Actually I don't think there's an inherent gap between academics and practitioners. Stating that there is per se a discrepancy between practice and theory is an easy way out for people who want to stay in their comfort zone. If there is a gap, this is on the level of intentions, not, for instance, in the object of deliverables.
I experience lots of dialogue between theory and practice. We just haven't found a mechanism to capture the dialogue effectively and so it looks non-existent. Taking as an example deliverables, here the

perceived gap lies more in the limitation of the product than by what it is informed."

So how can we foster such dialogues?
"A fight is the most efficient form of dialogue. It's time to open up more (verbal) spaces of fights instead of continuing impolite dialogues that do not change anything."

Can you give an example?
"Gender politics is a good example. The strength of feminists is that they have the same goal and language, but at the same time they are able to critically discuss and fight with each other about strategies."

How does knowledge trigger change?
"Knowledge is change."

How does knowledge trigger transformation?
"In itself knowledge doesn't transform anything. Knowledge can be mobilised/translated into an action of transformation. Knowledge and agency can lead to empowerment, knowledge without agency can lead to disempowerment, even entrenchment."

How do you relate your work on local realities to global problems?
"That's a difficult question. Because how do you define

the local, are the borders in the geography, ideology or in the platform? The local does not get produced out of a vacuum. You only realise the local in contrast to the non-local."

And how do you realise the global?
"The global does not exist in a material way in itself. The local is the only point where the global can be realised in the material way."

What does that mean?
"Well, sitting as an Indian in a Taipei Starbucks talking to Dutch colleagues is an example. The experience is global but only because it plays out locally, in this case Taipei. Another interesting example is how new local-global interaction plays out in Second Life. (Second Life is a free 3D virtual world where users can socialise, connect and create using free voice and text chat.)"

Do you work with specific methodologies?
"We focus on multidisciplinary inquiry. Multi-disciplinarity is a non-integrative mixture of disciplines in that each discipline retains its methodologies and assumptions without change or development from other disciplines within the multidisciplinary relationship. Basically, we can all learn the most from people approaching a common object but from different perspectives and strengths."

To what part of your programme do you want dialogue participants to pay particular attention?
"Our approach to knowledge. Our programme is about decentralisation of knowledge, not on becoming 'the experts'. We focus on amplifying existing voices and joint sense-making rather than on producing a new voice. Collaboration is key. So, we look forward to sharing these experiences of knowledge decentralisation."

Interview and editing by Fieke Jansen and Josine Stremmelaar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Essay by Ana Victoria Portocarrero Lacayo

What's the question again?

Power/knowledge and the question of women's pleasure in Nicaragua

I have been conducting fieldwork on women's pleasure in Nicaragua. Many social injustices, including sexual violence against women and gender-based inequalities, are based on the negation of women's pleasure, on a conception of women as sexual 'objects' and not 'subjects' of pleasure, whose sexuality is 'used' only to procreate or to please men.

How are women 'empowered' through the work of women's organisations on sexual rights? How is this 'empowerment' visible after they become aware of their right to sexual pleasure? I found no answers, because I posed the wrong questions. My interviewees talked about diverse topics, some of them talked more explicitly about pleasure, others talked about their experiences of violence, how they learned to defend and educate themselves and their children, their economic autonomy, and their knowledge about contraceptives and family planning.

What could this mean? That young, urban, educated women are more 'aware' of their sexuality, live it in a way that includes pleasure, hence they are more 'empowered' than rural women? That women only assign importance to sexual 'pleasure' after they escape violence and poverty?

Any conclusions would be incomplete, biased and reinforce power relations, because they would emerge from my point of view, my own life experience as a white, young, middle class woman in a heterosexual monogamous relationship, with access to literature by writers like me. The categories I would use to see 'the other' would be my categories. As a researcher, I would commit an epistemic injustice.

Knowledge can trigger change, but a more democratic notion of knowledge must be pursued to ensure that unequal power relations based on knowledge production are not reinforced. Regarding my research, it would be better to first unveil my own biases before posing questions to women about their experiences.

Ana Victoria Portocarrero Lacayo (Institute of Social Studies)

Publication

Despite the global economic crisis can we sustain local economies?

Development keeps trying to understand that critical question, as shown in vol 53 no 3 of the magazine entitled "Beyond Economics: Sustaining Local Economies". In partnership with the Hivos, the journal takes a dual approach: one to continue the debate on beyond economics bringing in new voices and building on the dynamic discussions of the earlier journal and in various meetings and on-line debates. The second is to document some of the alternatives found in the local economies which are functioning on the margins of neo-liberal global capitalism.

The issue continues the debate on beyond economics looking critically at the impact of the sub prime crisis, the politics of money and the impact of the crisis on women. It also examines local markets, strategies for sustainability, solidarity economies and care networks as ways to empower people and encourage greater civic agency. From both a rights perspective and critical development perspective the journal issue looks at how to develop diverse modes of production in different parts of the world. The journal issue features innovative ways to understand possible alternatives to global capitalist economies as part of the search for sustainable futures.

Some of the key questions asked by authors from rural Tanzania to urban Bucharest are: how does the State

support local economies created by civil society initiatives? What role does the private sector play? What enables local enterprises to flourish? How do local markets feed into and work with global markets? Is the social and care economy a possible third system? What are the ways forward for environmental sustainability, well being and equality in a new more responsible development process that can respond to the current climate, financial and care crises?

Development vol 53 no 3 will be launched at the Hivos meeting 'Knowledge & Change, Theory and practice of development dilemmas' to be held in The Hague, 29 September 2010 as well as on line on the SID Forum in Development's contribution to the lead up to UN meeting on environment and development, Rio+20.

Wendy Harcourt (Society for International Development)


DOKTER IKAN HIAS
HONDA

< Streetlife Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 2010 (photo U. Seela)

Personal reflections by Ute Seela

An insight, but personal

Discussions on religion in the Dutch context often revolve around individual freedom, which we consider to be the result of liberation from religious pressures.[1] Liberal policies on abortion, euthanasia, same-sex marriage and soft drugs have given the Dutch the feeling that they live in the most progressive country in the world whose example will, sooner or later, be followed by others. Even though the political parties that initiated most liberal policies currently do not make up the government, 'freedom' is still seen as a cornerstone of Dutch society. Religion, or more specifically a significant role of religion in politics, is looked at by many with discomfort.
Humanist values, such as individual self-determination and an aversion to dogma, shape many people's perception of religion and its negative impact on women and sexual minorities.

It probably is this Dutch context that frames our view of the struggles about values that are going on in many countries in which we support human rights movements. And quite often, we see religious dogma as the key source of problems. We see Islamic conservatives having a considerable impact on Indonesian politics. We see Ugandan Pentecostals stirring up homophobia. Or Hindu fundamentalists acting as moral police for young women behaving in an 'un-Indian' way. Perhaps the most discouraging

realisation is that a large percentage of the population does not seem to care.

In discussing these developments with human rights defenders in these countries one comment seemed to sum up the situation: "We human rights activists need to run as fast as we can to stay at the point we are now". How is it possible that not only governments, but public opinion, too, seems to take recourse to conservative religious and cultural values – dismissing human rights as a Western agenda?

There is no lack of academic research on religious fundamentalism. Look at Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, Karen Armstrong, Malise Ruthven, or Peter Herriot. However, their studies do not shed much light on why women or sexual minorities face such difficulties in mobilising support for their plea for the equality of all human beings in for example India or Uganda.

This led Hivos to believe that it can help generate that specific policy-related knowledge by bringing together social scientists and practitioners in a joint project to formulate 'Alternatives to Fundamentalisms'. In a series of workshops in 2007 we tried to identify which questions could reasonably be raised by this unusual mix of 'campaign-oriented' human rights activists and

deliberating academics. While from an 'action' point of view the questions are 'why' and 'what to do about it' , good academic research locates itself at a reflexive distance to the analysed object.

The workshops produced different responses - some of which were rather critical; the choice of 'fundamentalism' as an entry point was seen as particularly problematic. Partners in Indonesia, for instance, agreed that their country's unity was challenged by Islamic 'fundamentalists' but did not want to take part in a project that had this loaded term in its title. The institution felt that it would have to choose its language carefully in order to be able to enter into a dialogue with the more radical Islamic organisations. As a result of these discussions the title of the programme was changed to the 'Promoting Pluralism Knowledge Programme' – which we are now running as an experiment.

We feel this approach may work. It provides practitioners with a space in terms of location, time and money where difficult matters can be thought through. At the same time, academic research is being drawn closer to practical societal dilemmas. Yet bridging the two worlds does not happen automatically by setting up a joint programme. We are in continuous negotiation about what constitutes relevant knowledge,

who the author of the knowledge agenda is, and who the audience is.

Take for instance the question of who owns the knowledge agenda. This is as much a debate between academics and practitioners, as it is between the local teams in the three countries and the organisations initiating the programme. The original focus on 'Alternatives to Fundamentalism' as a title, as well as the choice of countries (selected from the places where Hivos works), stemmed largely from the deliberations of Hivos and Kosmopolis, both external actors to the social settings in for instance Indonesia and Uganda. With the best of intentions this departure point puts a donor on the defence: Who are you to come and ask us to do research on pluralism? What is your hidden agenda? Why don't you invest that same energy in addressing intolerance in the Netherlands? It also raises another set of dilemmas. As an organisation with a back donor itself (Hivos is largely funded by the Dutch government), we are also part of the 'account-for-your-money' chain. Formulating the core of the programme was necessary at the outset to acquire funding. Now the funds are provided, showing results at regular intervals is a requirement of the project cycle. This not only entails reports but also a judgment about the extent to which the initiative has achieved the envisaged outcomes. It produces the much criticised donor mentality of

wanting to frame, steer and if necessary, interfere. It is also a role that is at loggerheads with the Knowledge Programme idea of 'equal partnership'.

Perhaps one of the core achievements of the programme in the future will be to have found adequate terminologies that are understood and easily used in the local context. A phrasing that provides room for local interpretations rather than prescribing a uniform meaning from a liberal - and thereby largely western - perspective. A phrasing which, at the same time, can be 'translated back' into the Dutch public debate. The debate on religious fundamentalism in India or Indonesia is no longer a national debate, but linked to political events in the Western world. The in-between knowledge gained from academic-practitioner collaboration can feed into a re-think of Hivos' role as a civic actor with its own 'local challenges'.

Ute Seela (Hivos)

[1] The following column is a slightly adjusted version of 'Bridging the academic-activist gap', an article on the openDemocracy online forum 'Religion, Gender and Politics', see http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/ute-seela/bridging-academic-activist-gap

< Pluralism workshop in Pesantren, Indonesia, 2009 (photo ICIP Yogyakarta)

Interview with

Alan Fowler

Bio: Alan Fowler worked as a manager, adviser, researcher and writer. He has made specific contributions to development through his books, publications and presentations. His focus lies on the experience and perspectives of citizens, civil society and non-governmental organisations, usually in the context of international relations, aided development, democratisation and social change. Prof. dr. Alan Fowler is a past President of the International Society for Third Sector Research and was a board member of CIVICUS, the Global Alliance for Citizen Participation. He is currently an affiliate professor at the Institute of Social Studies in The Hague.

www.alanfowler.org

How do you think knowledge triggers change?
"It is important to first unpack 'knowledge' and 'change'. What is knowledge, and whose knowledge is it? For me, knowledge is *embodied* information upon which people can act or not as the case may be. When talking about knowledge, I prefer using the plural form 'knowledges'. This is because knowledge comes from different sources, it has different 'owners' and displays different types, such as overt and tacit knowledge. We also need to unpack the term 'change', particularly in terms of the time frame involved. In our work on Civic Driven Change (CDC) my colleague Kees Biekart and I make a distinction between changes that are immediate, or are tied to political, institutional or inter-generational scales of time. Being explicit about time horizons in relation to knowledge for change is important.

Does knowledge trigger change? I believe it's a questionable starting proposition. When knowledges are 'packaged', they are often treated as commodities which can be applied to change. But knowledge can also be used selectively by powerholders to maintain the status quo, that is to prevent change. But, you could argue – and this is sort of a counterfactual – that the fact that nothing has changed is also a change. If you use knowledge to stop change in a dynamic environment you're affecting change by trying to stick

where you are. In other words, knowledge always influences change but not necessarily in the way intended. It's a paradoxical and uncertain relationship.

In development cooperation, I think insufficient attention is paid to different types of knowledges and knowledge holders. Assumptions about the relationship beween knowledges and development would become more valid if we would better acknowledge who has them, how they generate, how they are valued, how they are validated, how they seem to be true or not.

Those with greater power consider their knowledge to be more valid or 'universal' than others. This problem plays out in the aid system because of built in asymmetries of power which privileges the knowledge of givers over that of receivers. As in many other areas, the aid system defines the 'knowledge problem' in terms of the solution that it can offer. In this case, the solution is 'management' of knowledge that can be written down. Interactive generation, co-production as an important empowerment method and context-based endogenous knowledges are simply marginalised. Knowledge that is lived and cannot be 'de-centrally' stored or managed takes second place in aided change."

How do you think the gap between researchers and practitioners can be bridged, if at all?
"The basic academic stance is to be skeptical; while the stance of NGOs and by and large of practitioners is, in the first instance, to be encouraging, engaging and supportive. Practitioners tend not to be skeptical because it makes you appear you're not helping people.

But these stances or pre-dispositions can be held together. If you actively put energy into nurturing the relationship between skepticism and appreciation the tension can help you move forward. For example, you need to be totally engaged in development work, totally committed to it. But if you want to be useful you also need to be detached at the same time.

So, how do you hold together commitment and detachment? One way is by standing back from your passion and your engagement, being honest about who you are and continually curious about what you are doing. Then ambiguity becomes productive. If we as NGO workers and aid researchers cannot criticise ourselves, we are in a much more vulnerable position when others criticising us from outside. Then we can only be reactive, defensive; and that is not a productive way to approach the problem of bridging across professions.

Personally I'm not the 'publish or perish' academic, nor am I a 'with-my-feet-in-the-mud' practitioner. I try and hold these together. But it means living with the fact that you are always going to be less than optimal in one of these two peer groups. If you are in an operational NGO really trying to develop the intellectual side of the organisation, you will probably find yourself on the edge of what is possible. If you are in an academic institution – like ISS – really trying to work with practitioners, you are blamed for not being rigorous and publishing enough. People who are trying to be both are the 'boundary spanners' dealing with two different performance measures. But by trying to be both they may only ever score a 6 out of 10 in both professions. But if you can score two 6s, that's actually 12, which, for me, is better than being a pure academic scoring a 10. I'm sort of comfortable enough with the two 6s, but I cannot be comfortable with two 5s."

How do you think research – in your case, civic driven change research – could eventually mean something for practice?

"To some extent the question is already being answered spontaneously across the world. People are picking up the concept for themselves and operationalise it in whatever way they think is appropriate for where they are. CDC tries to desectoralise, to 'unlabel' citizens as development actors from convenient boxes: 'you're

from the civil society sector', 'you're with the government'. CDC helps to break out of that old frame and trap in thinking. We have to try and get people to appreciate once more that they are political actors, whatever walk of life they're in. A challenge of CDC is to undo some of the labeling and produce new language that may help people to reconsider what they are doing already, in ways which are more meaningful for their lives as citizens. That's how research can be meaningful for practice. It is an attempt to facilitate new ways of thinking."

Interview and editing by Frederique Demeijer and Marlieke Kieboom

Essay by Jeanette Kloosterman

More gender equality in sustainable livelihoods

Oxfam Novib's Gender Mainstreaming and Leadership Trajectory (GMLT) and the Sustainable Land Use Forum (SLUF), Ethiopia

In November 2009 the Sustainable Land Use Forum (SLUF, Ethiopia) showed remarkable improvement in gender mainstreaming. Remarkable because traditionally sustainable land use is considered a technical, gender-blind issue and the organisations that deal with them usually aren't known for being gender sensitive. But SLUF staff composition had accomplished 50/50 female-male representation; key working documents were made gender sensitive and member organisations were influenced to strive for an increase in the number of women programme beneficiaries to 70%.

Moreover, an experience-sharing visit for member organisation decision-makers and SIDA/SLUF Sub-Grantees was organised to Awramba, a community where rights of women, children and the elderly are respected. This visit triggered several member organisations to perform a gender mainstreaming self-assessment and gender analysis and gender mainstreaming training. SLUF produced a case study film about the exchange visit, and the organisation promotes the gender agenda in its forums and consultative meetings.

GMLT

It's no accident that these changes came about in SLUF. In 2008 it decided to participate in the GMLT,

which was initiated by Oxfam Novib to improve performance in gender justice issues of mainly aim 1 (right to sustainable livelihoods) and aim 4 (right to political participation) counterparts. Oxfam Novib invited especially these counterparts because it is in programmes 1 and 4 where the majority of organisations score 'yellow' on the Gender Traffic Light (GTL, part of ON's Performance Management tool box). The GMLT aims to make these counterparts score green. GMLT methodology entails an introductory meeting where main objectives, concepts and expectations are discussed. Second, the organisations perform a self-assessment, if necessary with the support of an external gender consultant. Oxfam Novib has trained in yearly international Trainer of Trainer workshops a group of consultants in the different regions where counterparts have become involved in the GMLT. The self-assessment leads to the elaboration of an action plan, which organisations are supposed to implement with their own means; Oxfam Novib only funds consultant support and gender mainstreaming start-up activities. If organisations need more money to implement the plan, they can take it up in their three-year project proposal to Oxfam Novib.

SLUF

SLUF is a membership organisation that promotes improved natural resource management and sustainable

land use practices. SLUF performed the self-assessment in July 2008, having noted a lack of an institutional approach to gender issues and informed programmes, a need to move beyond conceptual level, and a desire to experience a learning process for all.

Self-assessment and analysis led participants to prioritise the following goals: enhancing staff skills to mainstream gender and undertake gender analysis; hiring a gender officer and more female staff members; elaborating an HIV&AIDS and gender policy; incorporating a gender approach in key documents; improving gender mainstreaming in member organisations; and seeking funding to promote meaningful gender interventions. SLUF translated these into an action plan and project proposal, which resulted in a grant from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) to implement the action plan.

SLUF staff drew three important conclusions with regard to gender mainstreaming: management must take the lead and support the process; training on gender issues for staff at all levels is critical; and exchange visits between organisations or communities are more conducive to learning than formal gender trainings.

Jeanette Kloosterman (Oxfam Novib)

> LGBTI activism and research in Peru 2010 by Giancarlo Cornejo Salinas and Marten van den Berge

Essay by Marten van den Berge and
Giancarlo Cornejo Salinas

From activist research to promiscuous theories and methodologies

Methodological lessons from the research project Sexual Diversity Movement in Peru

Sexual diversity in Peru found political expression at the beginning of the 1980s, with the formation of the *Movimiento Homosexual de Lima and the Grupo de Autoconciencia Lésbico Feminista*. The movement spread to include other groups, for example, those who identify with a 'trans' identity, and outside the capital to other regions of the country. There are now more than 60 groups engaged in the fight for sexual diversity and gender identity in the country, with a wide range of identities, agendas, methods of action and forms of organisation.

In solidarity with their campaigns, we began a research project into the Peruvian sexual diversity movement. We wanted to break with the traditional anthropological and sociological practice of producing knowledge, which extracts information from "the subjects under research" in a way that benefits hegemonical power structures and the academics responsible for the research rather than the subjects of the research.

We therefore decided to use an "activist-research" methodology in an attempt to overcome the classic dichotomy between researchers and activists, which is based on a positivist division between science and ideology and between scientific objectivity and political involvement. This involves a political commitment to

the objectives of the group in struggle and aims to generate knowledge "by, with and for" that group.

We want to generate other epistemologies, knowledge and wisdom from a struggle that has been invisible for a long time and that has actually been concealed by studies into social movements. We are inspired by what Boaventura de Souza Santos calls the *"sociology of absences and the sociology of emergences"* (2006). We want to conduct research that *"transforms impossible objects into possible objects and uses them to transform absences into presences, focusing on fragments of unsocialised social experiencies" and that at the same time "opens up a future of plural and concrete possibilities that are simultaneously utopian and realistic"* (De Sousa Santos 2006).

Our research methodology provides us with a series of challenges and problems. The very concept of "social movement" is gender-bound and based on the dichotomisation of gender. Moreover, activists are not necessarily able to escape from the power relations they oppose and social movements have questioned the positions of those that aspire to "represent" or "empower" them. They remind us of the need to write with them and for them, especially in the contemporary context in which exclusion and violence are the main forms of relations. However, in order for this position to


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< LGBTI activism and research in Peru 2010 by Giancarlo Cornejo Salinas and Marten van den Berge

be genuinely democratic, we have to constantly ask questions. We cannot renounce our right to be critical. Activists do not form one big "happy family" and neither is the movement itself homogeneous.

As for the research itself, we have so far conducted interviews with 140 lesbian, gay, bisexuals, trans persons, sex workers and people living with HIV in 25 cities. We also intend to include participatory ethnographies about the places where the research was conducted.

We are ourselves activists in Lesbian, Gay, Trans, Bisexual and Intersex (LGTBI) groups and we have learned in practice that we need to be radical. We feel an affinity with the theories of Monique Wittig, who said that heterosexual thinking is common to practically all disciplines and forms the foundations of society and culture. We therefore think that the radical nature of our movement calls for promiscuous practices, promiscuous theories, promiscuous policies, promiscuous methodologies, promiscuous epistemologies and certainly promiscuous bodies.

Marten van den Berge and Giancarlo Cornejo Salinas (Programa Democracia y Transformation Global)

Interview with

Salam Kawakibi

Bio: Salam Kawakibi is a researcher in political and social science. He is a senior researcher at Arab Reform Intiative and Knowledge Programme Civil Society in West Asia at the University of Amsterdam. His main interests are media, civil societies, international relations and human rights in Arab countries. He also has written many articles on European and Arabic media and books. He is an appointed trainer in human rights and international human law. Furthermore, he is Associate Researcher for IREMAM Aix-en-Provence and GREMMO Lyon, collaborating with IFRI in Paris. Mr. Kawakibi is formally educated in economics, international relations, international humanitarian law, international human rights and political science.

How do you see the gap between academics and practitioners? How do you think this gap can be bridged (if at all)?

"The gap is relatively wide but it exists not only between the two parties within the countries involved, it exists also, and above all, within the parties working on the area from the outside. To bridge this gap requires better communication between the actors involved. Thus it's important to invest in training practitioners in a way that their thinking is based in part on academic research and enhances their ability to define problems in the field."

How is the academic-practitioner relationship relevant to knowledge exchange?

"What's been lacking in most movements for change in countries that have chosen this path is knowledge. Desire, commitment and material means are important factors but are useless without knowledge. This has been fully demonstrated in reality. In the field of human rights, for example, activists without knowledge hinder more than they help the process. Their ignorance of concepts and mechanisms detracts from their activism and fieldwork. Enhancing their juridical competence through knowledge and training improves in a very concrete way their contribution to the good cause to which they're committed."

How do you relate your work in local realities to global problems?
"In my research, it's important to me to emphasise specific subjects in a local context. However, at the same time, the handling of subjects must reflect a broader issue. It must make the connection between direct observation and conceptualisation. Thus working on GONGOs, for example, in the Syrian case gives me a broader perspective on similar experiences in different regions of the world while preserving the particularity of the designated case."

How do you think your research influences the programme(/movement)?
"In my specific case, I try to bring a perspective that mixes practical experience with theoretical conceptualisation. Prior knowledge of my complicated research field allowed me to pursue activity that to me seemed productive. My collaboration with the project enhanced my knowledge with 'independent' remarks and allowed me to provide an inside view of the situation and of the problem I'm looking into."

Essay by Elvira Cuadra Lira

Knowledge, development and feminism

The exchange of knowledge - the experience of Nicaragua

The development of feminist theory in recent times has opened a fierce debate about the scientific production of knowledge. The feminist critique of scientific methods of producing knowledge is based on the discrimination suffered by women and the androcentric bias of scientific organisational structures and discourse.

This critique has led feminist academics to formulate new research methodologies from a feminist perspective. In Latin America, most feminist academics continue to undervalue the wisdom and knowledge of the movement itself. The Hivos/ISS Knowledge Exchange Programme is therefore a new experience for the women's movement and researchers in Nicaragua and Central America.
The programme challenges traditional approaches to the production of scientific knowledge in the region by recognising the wisdom and knowledge of social actors, in this case, the leaders of the women's movement, and by using genuinely participatory methodologies (interviews, workshops etc.) Some of the most important results of the exchange of information were as follows:

a) The creation of a forum for dialogue and exchange within the women's movement in Nicaragua, allowing women to analyse the movement on the basis of their own individual experience and collectively, as a social movement.

b) An exchange of knowledge that promotes analysis of the women's movement in Nicaragua from the viewpoint of the movement itself rather than within the framework of conventional academic methods and studies.

c) An open, plural and tolerant discussion on issues that are of immediate interest to the movement but that have been fiercely debated and even caused ruptures within the movement.

d) Printed and audiovisual documentation on the history, strategies and challenges facing the movement as perceived by the leaders themselves.

Elvira Cuadra Lira (Centro de Investigación de la Comunicación)

Interview with

Josine Stremmelaar

Bio: Josine Stremmelaar is coordinator of the Knowledge Programme at the Hivos based in The Hague, the Netherlands (www.hivos.net). She is former Executive Manager of the International Institute for Asian Studies (www.iias.nl). She has a Master of Arts in Non-Western History at the Free University of Amsterdam. Her interest lies at the intersection of the knowledge landscapes of science, practice and policy, and how this dialogical relationship can contribute to development.

How do you define knowledge?
"It is difficult to define knowledge. Knowledge is not something tangible. It is something that only manifests itself when it is activated. Knowledge activation is an entangled process that is difficult to discern. Notwithstanding the difficulty of defining it, it is invaluable for how we think and act. Knowledge development, intake and usage gives meaning to our actions and the capacity to influence our surroundings. How and in what way it is valued depends amongst others on time and context. There are various expressions of knowledge and there are various ways of knowing. In the Knowledge Programme we aim to integrate various forms of knowledge, such as academic knowledge, activist knowledge, as well as educational and cultural expressions of knowledge. Through knowledge development we aim to contribute to the enhancement of the effectiveness and sustainability of development interventions."

How do you see the gap between academics and practitioners and do you think this gap can be bridged?
"The domains of academia, practice and policy have different notions of time, ways of working, knowledge systems, organisational cultures, reward systems, etc., which differ per context (disciplines, locations, history of interaction). Cross-domain cooperation can add value because of the difference in ways of working and

knowledge systems but can be hampered by organisational cultures and award systems. Crossing domains can be and is often experienced as a major challenge. When taken seriously, it challenges you to revisit your assumptions, ways of working and roles. This requires substantial investments in intangible processes of knowledge development which doesn't sit well with, for instance, the output driven development sector.

In the development sector, gaps are being bridged to a varying extent and in diverse ways. Based on the conviction that cross-domain cooperation is vital to comprehending the complexity of development and intervening effectively, more individuals are part of various domains and hence set up and participate in various initiatives (such as the KP) to work together across domains. The Knowledge Programme, for instance, has made cross-domain cooperation central to all of its processes. For example, in the Promoting Pluralism Programme we work in regional teams of academics and practitioners in India, Indonesia, Uganda and the Netherlands. In the Small Producer Agency in the Globalised Market Programme, a Southern-based learning network has been established and includes people from the sectors of academia, civil society and business. Compared to the potential of cross-domain cooperation and the multitude of challenges the development sector faces, however, the group

implementing this major agenda is relatively small."

How does knowledge trigger change?
"As I mentioned in answering the first question, knowledge capacitates people to effect change. What that change contributes to can vary widely. In the Knowledge Programme we focus on how knowledge can capacitate people to contribute to social transformation processes. Explorations range from knowledge capacitating social movements to viral campaigns to activists working in authoritarian settings. Activities include brainstorming, debates, research, documentation, dissemination, BarCamps, summer schools, workshops and knowledge dialogues."

Do you work with specific methodologies?
"Hivos uses the strategy of knowledge integration – a process of bringing multiple forms of knowledge together in a common framework. Integrating forms of knowledge, such as academic and activist knowledge as well as educational and cultural expressions of knowledge, can contribute to the development of new theories, policies and practices for the development sector. This is not a linear process of knowledge development, but a continuum of integrated i nteractions – connecting ideas and creating solutions."

Interview and editing by Frederique Demeijer

> Workshop Civil Society Building Knowledge Programme, Chiapas, Mexico, 2008


Team

Publications of the Knowledge Programme

Below you will find a selection of publications published per Knowledge Programme.

More information and downloads of publications can be found on www.hivos.net.

Civil Society in West Asia

Bonnefoy L., Poirier M (2010)., Civil Society and Democratisation in Contemporary Yemen. Knowledge Programme Civil Society in West Asia working paper series-no.3, Hivos/University of Amsterdam.

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Dütting G., Sogge, D., (2010), Moving targets: notes on social movements, Hivos civil society working paper series- no.2 ,Hivos/Institute of Social Studies, The Hague.

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[1] *translations to English forthcoming.*

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< Streetlife Yogyakarta, Indonesia, 2010 (photo U. Seela)

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