

exchange to change

Alumni magazine #43

January 2020



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E2C

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Common foreignness at home

(part of the graduation speech, by Nash Tysmans, chair of IOB student committee 18-19)

Tonight I'd like to talk to you about home... For most of us, including our Belgian classmates, this year marks a time in our lives spent away from home—from all that we know. Faced with this strangeness and bonding over our common foreignness, we have been allowed the opportunity to be at home with each other.

Discovering a new home in Antwerp did not quite take us away from our own longing for the familiar. Blame the cold, the length of winter nights, the erratic weather in this part of the globe. Add to this the immense pressure we seem to have placed upon ourselves to deliver and match our institution's high standards and you get the perfect recipe for anxiety. When we are anxious, feeling uncertain about what outcomes may take place, it seems easier to retreat to what feels safe, to what traditionally defines home for us. Rather than enjoying this unique diversity, some of us have looked to be with those in our class who speak like us, look like us, share our citizenship—people with whom we are sure we would get along. When I think about Antwerp and the city's own promise of diversity, I wonder if it is indeed as diverse as it says it is or if it is—a kind of place where people of different ethnicities come to live, but only with those like them. It is definitely easier to live with those whom we can share our certainties with rather than the questions that confront us anyway, no matter how hard we try to ignore them. Every day it becomes more difficult to practice development work, much more to define what it even means now—Here I invite you all to seriously consider what we have gotten ourselves into.

Today we are faced with the 6th mass extinction where every day we lose approximately 200 kinds of animal and plant life, they whose presence in our world allow us to live, to call this planet home. Biodiversity loss is astounding and so is the continued threat of global warming, rising sea levels, and climate change

As if that's not enough, we are also confronted by rising inequality, increased authoritarianism, the rise of populist world leaders whose visions for their people are so narrow, and limited only to those who share them.

In this age of stupid where policy making is done without regard for evidence and fact, what does it mean to get this education from IOB? Are we, as development workers, truly able to understand and address the real issues that face our communities or are we simply going with the flow and providing technical assistance in the hope that the plans we draft can indeed magically solve all our problems? The reality, as I see it, is that many of our existing systems are not sustainable and it's our task to make them so.

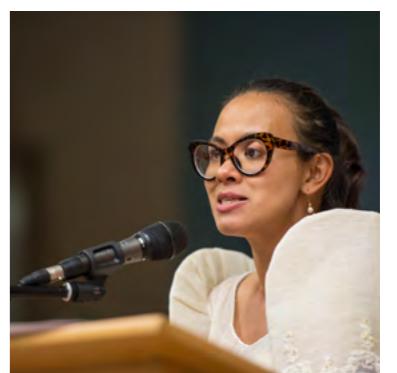
Returning to the idea of home, what I have found instructive as a development practitioner runs counter to my indoctrination. At home, the youngest members of the family aren't always the ones making decisions, charting the path for the rest of the family to take, yet today, it is the youth in our global home who are taking responsibility, who are acting like the adults we all should be. I prefer their voices over the monotony of the experts. Just look at Greta Thunberg and her school strike for the climate or Joshua Wong, the once 14-year-old Hong Konger who was David casting a stone against the Goliath of the Chinese government. These two young people, of limited means but great imagination, have inspired movements, shifts in ways of thinking, that have redefined for us what it means to live freely, peacefully, and joyfully in our common home.

So, dearest classmates, with this IOB education and new expertise, what will we do? Will we allow the young people to lead us toward a future we have not yet imagined? Or will we stand in their way because we crave the comfort of the familiar? Whether we like it or not, when we return to our homes and build new ones elsewhere, the privilege of this education makes us complicit in deciding who gets to belong, who gets to be a part of this home. Remember, we are the experts now, or at least this is the promise of our degree...will you bow to power or speak truth to it?

When in doubt, think about your IOB experience. Living, studying and being with all of you has proved to me that another world is possible. That home can be redefined and that the places where we live and the people we meet can transform us. Perhaps we should embrace the uncomfortable feeling of foreignness. If you were ever lonely while you lived here, or if you ever felt like you didn't belong, hold on to that feeling – it is the sentiment of minorities, of the people to whom our work must matter.

In conclusion, I urge you to do something every day that expands your definition of home – whether this means smiling at strangers, inhabiting other languages and cultures, or simply being more mindful of all the beings you come across. This is the only home we have. Let us dedicate our lives to protect what we should value – our homes and everyone and everything that lives with us and believe as I do that we can make home out of all the broken parts of the world.

Nash Tysmans



In the meantime...

UGANDAN ALUMNI SEMINAR

On 30 September 2019, a new edition of the Ugandan Alumni Seminar was organized at Hotel Africana, in Kampala. The event was part of the Alumni Barometer Research supported by VLIR-UOS (Global Minds project) and was organised by the Ugandan co-researcher team (Nicholas Mugabi and Georgina Manyuru) in close collaboration with Sarah Vancluysen (IOB researcher), Sara Dewachter (IOB alumni coordinator) and Hamidu Tusiime (president Ugandan alumni chapter).

The seminar started out with an e-seminar on realist evaluation by Dimitri Renmans, post-doctoral researcher at IOB, which unfortunately was plagued with some technical difficulties. After the presentation, the alumni first did an extensive ‘tour de table’ to get to know each other again. Then Sarah Vancluysen and Nicholas Mugabi presented two currently ongoing studies, respectively on refugees and the link to the home community in Uganda and on the alumni impact barometer. Alumni were asked to document their ‘IOB impact story’ capturing how they have been able to make a contribution to development (partially) based on what they have learned at IOB. Five wonderful impact stories were recorded!



Finally, all participants enjoyed a wonderful dinner together and finished reminiscing and forging future plans throughout the evening.

Some reactions from the participants:

“IOB should organize more of such events, this will keep us together, connect and make the alumni community strong.”

“This is the first event I have attended where alumni come together and share their impact stories and experiences after IOB. It is a very diverse community. We need to keep it together and make it stronger.”

“I was privileged to interact with students from other countries. We would share the different challenges that we had and when we sat together you’d find that there are some similar challenges and it is now time for us to implement.”

EVALUATION CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The second edition of the Evaluation Capacity Development Seminar entitled ‘Strengthening National Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities and Use’ was organised from 14 October 2019 until 25 October 2019. In total, 24 persons participated in the ECD seminar, who jointly represented evaluation expertise from a total of 12 countries, namely Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Peru, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe.

It was an intense two weeks filled with joint learning, group work, visits and interesting discussions, which culminated into country group SWOT analyses of both the national M&E system as well as of their national evaluation association. The videos in which the teams present their findings can be accessed through [the website](#).

It was another wonderful edition of the ECD training, with a great group of participants ... a fantastic new addition to the group of IOB alumni!



Nature as a subject of rights vs. rights of people?

A debate from the Colombian Amazon

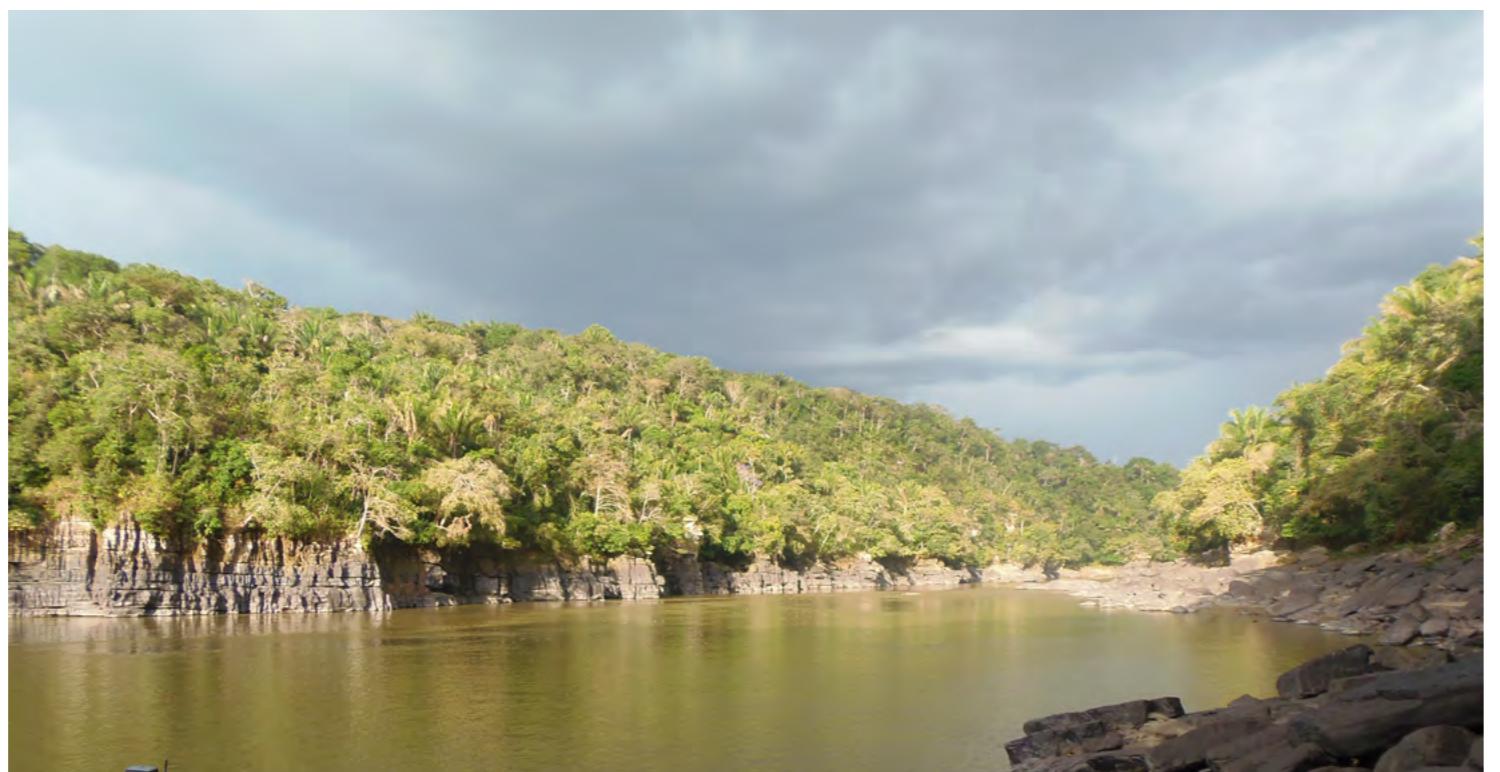
Due to recent massive deforestation events in several countries of the Amazonian basin (mainly Brazil, Bolivia and Colombia) and pressing international concerns about climate change, deforestation and conservation efforts in the region are currently the topic of many global debates. Although this problem has gained worldwide visibility in the last few months, it is not a recent problem for these South American countries, and different attempts to protect the Amazonian forest have been developed by academia, social organizations, NGO's and public institutions. In 2018, for instance, the Supreme Court of Justice in Colombia declared the entire Colombian Amazon as an entity entitled to rights, hereby responding to a demand issued by a group of children belonging to this region, who were claiming their fundamental right to a healthy environment to be protected. Although this event may sound encouraging to anyone who is concerned about the future of the Amazonian forest, the implementation of this Judicial Judgement in the field has provoked the emergence of a new type of socio-environmental conflict in the region, reinforcing the vulnerability of peasant and indigenous populations.

In what follows, Exchange to Change gives the floor to three actors that occupy different positions in the current debate around the rights of nature, the rights of people, deforestation and conservation in the Colombian Amazon:

Elver Medina (EM), President of the Peasant Environmental Association of Lozada-Guayabero -ASCAL-G- (Colombian Northwestern Amazonia);

Catalina Oviedo (CO), biologist at the National University of Colombia and representative of the action-research focussed NGO Centre for Alternatives to Development -CEALDES- and

María Alejandra Salazar (MS), specialist in Environmental Law at Probono Foundation.



E2C: What are the main drivers of fires and deforestation in the Amazon basin or at least in the Colombian Amazon?

MS: The main causes of deforestation in the Colombian Amazon are related to illegal mining, illegal wood extraction, land grabbing, illicit crops (coca), infrastructure projects and agro-industrial crops. It is important to say that these problems are strengthened due to the lack of capacity of environmental institutions to be present in the territory and to effectively control the area.

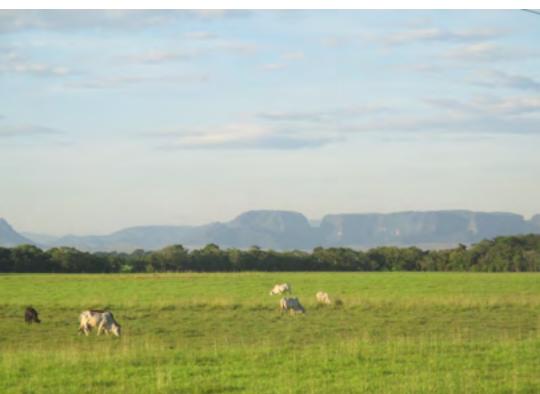
CO: The Colombian Amazon is not homogenous, meaning that causes of fires and deforestation may vary in each place or sub-region. However, this does not imply that there are no historical and structural causes. The highest deforestation rates within the Colombian Amazon take place in the North-Western part of the region, in the departments of Caquetá, Guaviare and Meta. These three departments share the confluence of three of the most important ecosystems in Colombia: Orinoquia savannahs, Sub-Andean forests and Amazonian tropical rainforest. There are also two elevations of the Guyanan rocky range - Macarena Serrania and Chiribiquete

Serrania. They have high rates of endemism and thus are very vulnerable to disturbances. This means that fires are taking place in a region of high genetic flows between three different ecosystems that provide very important ecosystems services to humankind.

North-western Amazonia has a complex history of different human settlements. It has been inhabited by indigenous communities and colonized by peasant and afro-Colombian communities that were displaced by the civil war from other regions of the country. There has been very little state presence, mainly limited to military interventions due to the fact that it was the operational epicenter of FARC guerrilla. In fact, it was only after the Peace Deal and the disarming of FARC in 2016 that deforestation rates began to rise. Subsequently, we started to look for the causes of this phenomenon and we found that FARC's surveillance over this territory was such that, after its disarming, a huge governance shift occurred: new actors came to the region looking for land to develop productive projects. In some cases, this was related with coca cultivation. But in most of the cases, land grabbing for cattle ranching and speculation in the land market were the main causes of the new deforestation trend.

We can see that two structural problems come together: unequal land distribution within Colombia (1% of the people holds 81% of fertile land) and the lack of governance and power void in a region that has some community-based land and environmental regulations which were more easily implemented under the FARC regime.

EM: We live in a transitional area between three different regions: the Andes, Orinoquia and Amazonia. The conservation of this region is very important. More specifically, we live in the interfluvium of the rivers Lozada and Guayabero, in the south of the department of Meta. Here, deforestation and fires in the forest are related to different issues. According to our position, the main cause



is the fact that the problem of land tenure has not been solved in Colombia. This means that a few people have a lot of land and the large majority of peasants do not have any. This pushes people to look for land on which to live. Besides this, some peasants start fires, arguing that crops grow better in lands that were previously set on fire. Other causes are extensive cattle ranching, land grabbing to grow extensive palm oil crops and mining.

E2C: What do you think about declaring nature as an entity of rights, as a strategy to protect the Amazonian forest? What are the advantages and disadvantages?

EM: I think it is very important, but the problem is that local communities have not been included in the decisions made after the declaration. I strongly believe that the active participation of local communities in decision making is the best way to protect the Amazon.

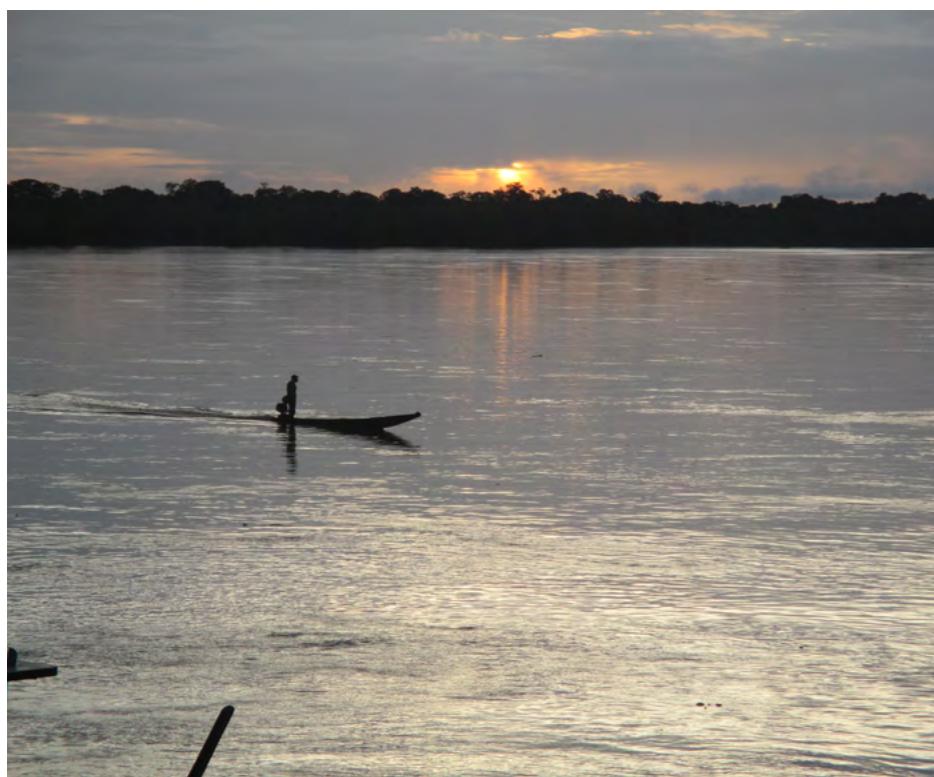
MS: It is a fact that Colombian jurisprudence is taking this path. Different

courts have already declared the Atrato, Magdalena, Cauca, and Quindío rivers and the Amazonia forest as subjects of rights. However, the problem in Colombia is not related to a lack of means to protect nature. In our political constitution we have different mechanisms of environmental participation that allow civil society to demand the protection of natural resources. The real problem is the lack of political will in the institutional apparatus to ensure that these mechanisms work. Unfortunately, a lot of positive judicial sentences such as the one for the Amazon, remain only on paper. The institutional apparatus is not strong enough to cover all the territory and enforce the law. This is why this kind of judicial sentence does not have a real impact on correcting the failures of the Colombian state, although they do introduce the new concept of nature as subject of rights. Despite this, an advantage of this kind of sentence is that it is now possible to directly demand the protection of nature's rights without the need to demonstrate that environmental

degradation is connected to specific situations of violation of the rights of one person.

CO: This kind of judicial pronouncement continues to be very ambiguous and is very difficult to implement. Yet they are transforming the daily lives of the people inhabiting these ecosystems. On paper, the declaration of the Amazon as a subject of rights implies an ecosystem with very few human interventions. This means, without extractive projects and very little impact on the ecosystem services necessary for life on Earth. This seems to be something positive, but its implementation has been focused on a military perspective of conservation. Thus, the main actions have been military operational activities focused on arresting and charging peasants for environmental crimes.

It is worth mentioning that the judicial pronouncement at stake itself contains some interesting aspects that could help reduce the conflicts that have been growing between local communities and environmental surveillance. This is the



call that the State Council has made to build an 'Inter-generational Pact for Life in the Colombian Amazon'. According to the judges, this pact should gather different populations, generations and institutions involved in the governance of the Amazon to build on common agreements for social justice and environmental conservation in the region. If we are capable of building this pact, we will have taken an important step towards the environmental and territorial defense of the Amazon.

EzC: As a leader of an Amazonian peasant organization, why do you think this declaration has provoked some conflicts between the Colombian state and local populations?

EM: This conflict emerged because the Colombian state has preferred to focus on the repressive orders of the judicial pronouncement, rather than on the participative aspects such as the order to build an Intergenerational Pact for Life in the Amazon. Repressive and military interventions should be directed towards powerful actors driving deforestation, instead of prosecuting peasants.

EzC: In your opinion, what is the role that social organizations should play to improve the conservation of the Amazonian forest? What role does the peasant association that you represent play?

EM: It is very important for social organizations to create community-based environmental agreements to lead conservation in the Amazonia. Our organization, ASCAL-G (Environmental Peasant Association of Lozada-Guayabero) has been leading the development of community rules for the last 22 years. These rules are always approved in assemblies. To give an example, some of these rules aim to protect endangered fauna from hunting and to regulate land use within peasant farms. In our territory, it is stated that every farm must be organized like this: 50% in pastures for cattle ranching, 10% for auto-subsistence food crops and 40% for forest preservation. It is also stated

that river banks and springs must be preserved within the forest. This way we try to balance our needs as peasants with environmental conservation. It is important for the state to comprehend and recognize this kind of arrangement instead of criminalizing people.

EzC: From an environmental law perspective, how do you think the rights of nature and the rights of people could be encompassed to achieve both social justice and environmental conservation objectives?

MS: Both the rights of people and the rights of nature should be interpreted from a perspective of environmental justice and participative justice. The Colombian Constitutional Court in a very broad jurisprudence has always argued for the importance of the participation of local communities in environmental decision-making. And not only ethnic communities with specific territorial rights, but every community which is affected by these issues. The reality is that the rights of people and the rights of nature are complementary and depend on each other to be protected. They should not be interpreted as opposite kinds of rights. This is why the participation of civil society needs to be included in environmental decision-making to protect both the rights of nature and the rights of people, in order to achieve environmental justice and conservation objectives.

EzC: What do you think is the role that science and academic research should play in complex socio-environmental conflicts as the ones currently taking place in the Amazon?

CO: CEALDES have been accompanying different processes of social organization in the Colombian Amazonia and we are currently conducting research on deforestation causes and environmental conflicts. This research is being conducted in partnership with different peasant organizations, which are playing an active role in the process. They are considered as part of the research process and are also receiving popular education in

judicial and environmental topics in order to improve their capacity to effectively negotiate with public institutions. In this sense, the role that our association aims to play is one of accompaniment and support of social organizations in the territory. Other purposes are to strengthen these organizations in terms of internal organizational issues; to generate concertation dynamics among peasant organizations and public institutions in order to relieve existing conflicts; to make visible the voices, stories and claims of peasants in relation to socio-environmental conflicts; and to contribute to the generation of productive alternatives in order to drive changes towards social justice in the region.

EzC: Almost all the Amazonian countries have joined several international agreements on climate change and conservation. What kind of actions do you think that international cooperation and national public institutions should take within a context as complex as the Amazon basin in the coming future?

MS: The problem with international agreements is that they have no teeth. They do not entail real sanctions for national states, which implies that in the end all that has been agreed is optional for each state to implement. In other words, what is agreed internationally may or may not be implemented by the current government in each country. This is why these agreements are known as soft law, because they do not have binding force. In this sense, to make these agreements work they should be converted into hard law; with binding force and specific sanctions. Otherwise, each current government can give international agreements a different degree of importance. The environmental rule of law must be strengthened.

EzC: What alternatives do you envision for the coming future in order to help solving the socio-environmental conflicts in this region?

EM: The first priority is to solve the land tenure inequality in Colombia. Then we need social investment and support for agri-ecological projects as a means to find alternatives to cattle ranching, which is currently the only way we can obtain some form of income. Repressive strategies are not the best alternative for conservation in the Amazon, and I think it is not the original purpose of declaring the Amazon as a subject of rights.

CO: There are some community-based agreements and norms to regulate management, usage and distribution of natural resources which have been developed several years ago. This is why big portions of the Amazonian forest had been preserved whereas nowadays we see deforestation. Local knowledge around social-environmental relations in peasant, indigenous and afro-Colombian communities is very important to take care of these ecosystems. This is why it is crucial for the Colombian state to recognize local practices, knowledge and agreements and to provide community institutions with the right to organization and planning in their own territories. Yet behind these apparently very obvious claims there are some structural issues that must be solved, such as distribution of land, stabilization of peasant economies and state presence in the territory beyond military interventions.

alumni panel

Issahaq Mohammed Jalaludeen
DEM 2008-09 | Ghana



Where do you work? I am a Senior Evaluation Specialist with the Islamic Development Bank Group (IsDBG). As staff in the Operations Evaluation Department that provides an objective and independent assessment of the development effectiveness of the IsDB interventions, I lead and contribute to project performance evaluations, thematic and sector evaluations, country assistance evaluations and special evaluations (upon management request). I also lead and assist in M&E capacity development and knowledge dissemination efforts in member countries of the IsDB.

One piece of advice for the graduating students from IOB ? I would kindly encourage colleagues to learn from everything and make connections, using IOB's rich ethnic and cultural diversity platform as a springboard.

Who is your 'hero' and why? Nobel Peace Prize winner (the late) Kofi Annan is my hero. He had a significant impact on the entire world during his two terms as UN Secretary-General by being very active for peace worldwide, a promoter of respect for human rights, an advocate for development in all parts of the world and a leader in the global fight against terrorism.

If you were the director of a research fund, what is a research question that you would agree to finance? As development practitioners, we aspire to see developing countries continue their development trajectories while at the same time decreasing their debt stock or aid dependency. However, the challenge has

always been how to finance capital intensive infrastructure that will support economic growth and prosperity. Meanwhile, private capital is still not being attracted in developing countries largely due to a variety of reasons. A research question worthy of support may be "what are the barriers to implementation of infrastructure projects in developing countries using the Public-Private-Partnership mode of financing?"

How did the IOB experience affect your life/career? The time spent at IOB helped me to appreciate more the socio-cultural diversities and values that enrich academic and development discourse. This experience is helping me greatly in a multi-national organization such as the Islamic Development Bank. Career-wise, the lessons I received in theories of development (politics of development and aid) have positively shaped my thoughts and understanding about development and how key actors engage in the development space. As I continue to work with a multilateral development bank that engages with its member countries on issues of development, this experience will continue to guide and inform my actions.

Hama Traore
DEM 2003-04 | Burkina Faso

Where do you work? Team leader of the Environment and Energy unit at the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). UNDP helps countries develop strategies to combat poverty by expanding access to economic opportunities and resources, linking poverty programs with countries' larger goals and policies, and ensuring a greater voice for the poor.

One advice for the graduating students from IOB ? Build a strong network with other IOB students on campus.

How has the IOB experience affected your life/ career? The IOB experience has positively affected my career. It opened a lot of doors for me as I was well equipped in terms of how to design, implement and evaluate programs and projects in order to promote equitable economic growth, socially-inclusive societies and improved access of vulnerable people to better living conditions.



Md Shakil Ahmed
DEM 2016-17 | Bangladesh

Where do you work? I am working at the BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University. I am working as a Senior Research Associate, and contributing to different research projects. My main focus is poverty and food security.

One advice for the graduating students from IOB ? First hand field experience has no alternative for those who are actually keen on being development researchers.

How has the IOB experience affected your life/ career? IOB played a significant role in strengthening my cognizance on research methods, especially quantitative, and in addition I also learnt a lot about qualitative methods. My extended knowledge makes me confident enough to take on new challenges at my work place. I moved to BRAC Institute of Governance and Development (BIGD), BRAC University for a higher position which has opened a new horizon in front of me. My research includes various successes, e.g. one of my papers was published in the American Journal of Agricultural Economics in 2018 and I was invited to present my IOB dissertation in the 19th Global Development Conference, which took place in Bonn, Germany in October, 2019.



Power to decouple. Hybrid regimes in the international system: a multimethod analysis

On 10 October 2019, Mathias De Roeck successfully defended his PhD thesis on hybrid regimes.

Time for Exchange to Change to interview this brand new Dr. in Development Studies!

E2C: Can you give us a short summary of your PhD project?

My PhD project focused on explaining the rise and stability of hybrid regimes, i.e. regimes mixing democratic and authoritarian institutions, such as unfree and unfair multiparty elections. I made use of multimethod analysis, combining statistical analysis with case studies of Rwanda and Burundi, to highlight the geopolitical and strategic origins of hybrid regimes. The PhD showed, on the one hand, that U.S. hegemony towards the end and immediately after the Cold War and the worldwide pressure to democratize contributed to the emergence of hybrid regimes, but that the quick transition to a multipolar world with declining U.S. power undermined pressure to democratize, fostering hybrid regime survival. On the other hand, the PhD also demonstrated the important role of state elites in shaping hybrid regimes. My case studies showed that state elites use the state as a means to pursue political ends. More specifically, hybrid regimes are complex outcomes of Western pressure to democratize in a context where state

elites enjoy significant state capacity, allowing them to deal creatively with this pressure and to fake democracy.

E2C: What or who triggered your interest in the concept of 'hybrid regimes'?

My interest in hybrid regimes is twofold. First, I wanted to know more about the 'hybrid' character of these types of regimes. All too often, social scientists have studied political regimes making use of the polar opposites of 'democracy' and 'authoritarianism', thereby neglecting the many different sub-forms political regimes can take. Second, I also became interested in hybrid regimes because I did not have any clear-cut explanation for them. Many traditional sociological theories of political regimes, such as modernization theory, world society theory and world-systems theory, focus on democracy or authoritarianism, falling short of accounting for hybrid regimes. The prospect of explaining these types of regimes by going beyond traditional sociological frameworks looked very challenging to me.

E2C: In your thesis you touch upon the role of China and how its rise in the international trade markets contributes to hybrid regime survival. Should this be a cause of concern for Western countries and/or the citizens living under hybrid regimes?

The quick and vast rise of the People's



Republic of China in international relations presents a clear challenge to Western countries. On the one hand, the rise of China upsets existing power relations, tilting the balance of power away from the West towards the East. On the other hand, it demonstrates that high quality authoritarian governance outperforms democracy when it comes to bringing about development results. Both trends are causes of concern for Western countries and citizens across

E2C: What are the policy recommendations or advice/lessons that can be drawn from your research?

A discussion of policy suggestions immediately raises the question: policy suggestions for whom? And policy suggestions for what? In the PhD, I formulated policy recommendations for Western policy makers, and EU officials in particular, because these are powerful actors. In doing so, I engaged with the EU strategy document "A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy," written in 2016 but still very relevant today. Based on the findings of the PhD, I formulated seven clear-cut policy recommendations. The most important recommendation, in my view, focuses on the nature of state-society relations in (aid-)dependent states. I argued that EU officials should promote cooperation between, rather than the resilience of statist or societal actors. In my opinion, this cooperation is best achieved by rejecting distributive in favour of collective state policies, increasing societal capacity (for instance through civil society support, private sector development, fair terms of trade), and supporting projects that foster interaction between society and the state. I also made clear that cooperation is sector-specific, with reinforcing processes for both infrastructural state capacity and development. Within this context, EU policy makers should take a pragmatic, norm-driven and locally sensitive approach rather than a purely dogmatic one and avoid double standards.

E2C: For your case study on Rwanda, you spent some time in Kigali. How did your research stay abroad contribute to your PhD thesis?

To be sure, for the Rwanda-Burundi case studies, the main type of data I used was secondary source material (history books, PhD dissertations, NGO reports, journal articles, etc.). In my view, the IOB generally undervalues this type of data, although, in fact, many important social science contributions have been made using this data. For my PhD, I did indeed spend three months in Rwanda. This research stay was useful in various respects. First, it made me more familiar with the cases under investigation and the Great Lakes Region more generally. Second, it gave me access to additional and first-hand information based on semi-structured interviews with donor officials. Finally, my fieldwork also allowed for 'targeted investigations', i.e. to look for information not stemming directly from secondary sources. In my eyes, the Rwanda experience made the overall PhD argument not only more compelling, but probably more reliable as well.

E2C: During your PhD public defence you were praised for your capacity to conduct high quality multi-method research. Which methods did you combine and what was the main advantage/challenge of combining these methods?

In the PhD thesis, I combined global (large-N) statistical analysis with (small-N) comparative-historical analysis of Rwanda and Burundi after the Cold War. The main advantage of this type of multimethod analysis was that it allowed for a theoretically nuanced and empirically rich theory of hybrid regimes. The large-N study sketched out the overall international background context of the emergence and survival of hybrid regimes, while the small-N studies inductively made the argument more complex by relying on cases studies. One of the main challenges of the multimethod research, however, involved the integration of the large-N and small-N findings, in order to formulate a convincing general account of hybrid regimes.

E2C: You've also been a teaching assistant at IOB for the past six years. Which teaching task did you enjoy the most?

As an IOB teaching assistant, I really enjoyed Debating Development, a series of debates on development topics, which the IOB organizes each year in collaboration with USOS and UCSIA. Debating Development is very practical and hands-on, allowing IOB assistants to decide on an overall Debating Development theme and to work out specific debates. Debating Development, for instance, allowed me to organize debates on subjects as diverse as the future of democracy in sub-Saharan Africa, superdiversity, world-cities and inequality. Likewise, it also gave me the opportunity to meet and dine with inspiring scholars, ranging from Nicholas Cheeseman and Laurence Whitehead to Erik Swyngedouw, Bram Büscher, and so forth. All this was in turn very inspiring for my own PhD research.

E2C: Finally, what are the lessons learned from your PhD process and (how) do you think they will be useful for your upcoming professional challenge?

At the very start of my PhD, I probably made some regrettable choices. From the outset, I was determined to focus on, as Charles Tilly called it, 'Big Structures, Large Processes, and Huge Comparisons', even though the majority of my colleagues were focusing on micro-dynamics within individual states. At the same time, I engaged with academic debates, and made use of data and research techniques, which from one perspective lowered my chances to publish in international journals. In my view, these choices implied that I had to work very hard to complete the PhD successfully, and do so in a very individual way. Hence, for me the main lesson learned, and this is rather personal, is that in the future I should do more to listen to other people's careful advice. Determination and conviction are surely good traits, but they also have limits.

Every year, IOB students embark on a quest to answer a scientific research question they are passionate about. Their drive to answer this question can stem from their own personal life experience or can be based on their previous professional activities or even be triggered by an interesting article or discussion during class. The way students go about finding the answer to this research question also differs from student to student. While some students prefer to start from their desk, crunching databases or going through the literature with a fine tooth comb, others dive into the 'field' of real life to learn about the realities on the ground and collect data there to answer that crucial question. Still others team up with organisations active in this particular topic and combine an internship with the process of writing an IOB dissertation.

Exchange to change introduces you to three IOB students, passionately trying - each in different ways - to find answers to their own research question.

Meet Esther, Arnel and Lenyora and join them on their search for answers.

About Lenyora

My name is Lenyora Kabelo Sihwa and I am a Zimbabwean. I am a monitoring and evaluation practitioner with a keen interest in evaluation, therefore I decided to study Development Evaluation and Management. I also hold a Masters in Operations Research and Statistics. One of my dreams is to live in a world free from inequality and extreme poverty hence my focus on development work. My main interest is gender equality, and climate change and sustainability.



Desk study: Mobility constraints and their implications on Improving Girls' Access through Transforming Education (IGATE) programme in Zimbabwe

E2C: What was the drive behind you choosing the desk study experience?

I decided to conduct a desk study because, given the timeframe, I saw it as a practical and accomplishable goal. Furthermore, I already had the data available for my intended study. I had already done empirical research in my academic and professional career and I wanted to further my experience in desk study research and expand my writing proficiency.

E2C: Did you enjoy the experience and what was most memorable?

First and foremost, I enjoyed the comfort of my home while completing my dissertation. Conducting the desk study meant that I could interact easily with my supervisor, in person, via email or even Skype. It also meant that I could engage with my colleagues easily.

E2C: What are some of the

challenges you experienced during the desk study experience?

The major challenge I experienced was mainly as a result of the data I was using. I had to do a lot of back and forth consultations with the people who collected the data. These consultations at times proved not to be helpful.

E2C: Which advice would you like to share for the incoming students interested in the experience you had in the desk study?

If you are interested in conducting a desk study, then I advise you to start early because it is not easy. Try to get your data early and have an idea of what it entails, a lot can go wrong and you do not have the luxury of going into the field to find corrections. Lastly, but most importantly take a break once in a while, you deserve it. Good luck with your desk study.

Field work: Land rights and forest conservation in the ancestral domain of indigenous peoples

E2C: Kindly share a bit about yourself.

I am Arnel D. Bilibli, a member of the Tuwali-Ifugao indigenous peoples in the Cordilleras, Philippines.

E2C: What was the drive behind you choosing field work in the Philippines?

Fieldwork is necessary within my chosen research which is on land rights and forest conservation in the ancestral domain of indigenous peoples. In as much as I want research that I can use in my line of work and which can be used by other development workers working with indigenous peoples, I felt that grounded data straight from the ancestral domain is needed. Issues from my fellow indigenous peoples have to be heard and actual observation of the communities adds to data quality.



E2C: Did you enjoy the experience and what was most memorable?

It was bliss. The motorcycle episodes, the climb through the mountains and the rice terraces, informal talks with the young ones right in the communities, reconnecting with former colleagues, chasing waterfalls, the rice wine drinking, and even the chewing of beetle nut in efforts to strike conversation with indigenous knowledge holders - field research is indeed enjoyable. Although academic, it was also a personal journey of having to reflect on the impacts of the development work that we implement in the rural communities.

E2C: What are some of the challenges you experienced in the field?

Picture this. You start your motorcycle ride at 5AM over rugged roads with deep terrains. It was drizzling and landslides are common. You reached the area at about 9AM only to find out that the supposed informant is not in the area, even though it was coordinated beforehand, because of some emergency he has to take care of. The challenge is to look for a substitute in the community that is familiar with the topic. Moreover, answers to questions in indigenous communities do not come easily. One has to establish a rapport first. Knowledge of the local language proved handy.

E2C: Which advice would you like to share for the incoming students interested in the experience you had in the field?

Grab the chance offered by IOB for a field travel grant. Aside from a more realistic understanding of issues on the ground, one develops better appreciation of the local context and a more critical reflection on information gathered.

About Esther

My name is Esther Philipen, I am a 23 year-old Belgian student and I am following the Development Evaluation and Management track at IOB. I got the opportunity to combine field work for my dissertation with an internship at Ugandan Youth and Adolescents Health Forum (UYAHF) in Kampala.



Internship and field work in Uganda

What was the drive behind you choosing field work in Uganda?

Right from the moment that I saw we could combine our dissertation with fieldwork at IOB, I decided that I wanted to collect the data for my thesis during a field work experience. More specifically, since I didn't have experience in the field yet and was very curious about it. Especially when I found this internship at UYAHF in Kampala, focusing on gender equality and sexual reproductive health rights, I became even more enthusiastic to undertake this field work. As I am very passionate about these two topics, I was extremely curious about the ideas and experiences concerning this topic in Uganda. Also, since I had been in Uganda before and fell in love with its people, nature and atmosphere back then, I was very excited to go back and enjoy the country again.

Did you enjoy the experience and what was most memorable?

It was an amazing experience! I enjoyed every second of it, even the more challenging ones. I like to challenge myself and throw myself into something new. Therefore, I loved the experience as I had to adapt to a new environment, meet with new people, get used to different customs and make the place my home for the six weeks I was there. The interaction with the people and with the respondents for my interviews were also very inspiring.

Most memorable for me was how kind the people were. I really miss that friendliness here in Belgium sometimes: greeting people on the street, stopping at the roadside if you see that someone has a flat tire or smiling at the market vendor as you recognize each other. What was also memorable, was to see how passionate the staff at UYAHF was about gender equality and empowering young people. They do a great job and

work very hard to achieve this great result. Therefore, being part of this movement was amazing to experience.

What are some of the challenges you experienced in the field?

As well as the tasks I had to do as an intern at UYAHF, I was there to collect data for my research and since I had six weeks to collect 40 interviews, I had to find a way to combine these two things. This was not always easy as sometimes things did not work out the way I thought they would work out. This meant that sometimes I could not hold my interviews as was planned, because meetings took longer than expected, interview arrangements were cancelled, or it was raining hard and boda boda drivers refused to take me somewhere. However, this was a great way to learn about your own way of doing things and questioning them. Sometimes you just have to adapt to the circumstances as they are and change your plan. It was enriching to experience that in the end, things also work out even though it was not in the way you had planned it. It means that now I am more flexible if things do not work out as I had planned.

Which advice would you like to share for the incoming students interested in the experience you had in the field?

Go for it! Get out of your comfort zone (or away from your desk) and go into the field. The experience and involvement with your research topic which you get when doing fieldwork are by no means comparable with doing desk research. Besides this, it is also a great personal development you go through. I would not hesitate to do it again!

Mobility window: An experience worth a lifetime in Tanzania

Each year, several IOB students have the opportunity to embark on a "Mobility window", a research internship at one of the IOB partner universities in the South. Anil Chaudhary reports from Mzumbe University, Tanzania.

"I had never thought that I would have the opportunity to explore Africa when I joined the advanced Master in Development Evaluation and Management at IOB, though when I was working in different development organisations in Nepal, I used to imagine working in Africa. During the introductory sessions of the Master program, I came to know that there are opportunities for students through the Mobility Window to go to Tanzania, Nicaragua and the Philippines and gain research knowledge and skills in the field as well as work closely with professors of local universities. Since then, I started thinking this was the kind of platform I was looking for to explore Africa. Then, I applied for the Mobility Window after the call for applications and got selected for Tanzania.

I was anxious and excited to visit and work closely in communities; which I believed to be different from where I was born and raised. Over a six week period, I had the opportunity to closely work in an action research project at Mzumbe University in Tanzania. The research project of which I was a part was a joint initiative of IOB and Mzumbe University related to water quality monitoring with the use of ICT. We were two students from our Master programme; Lotte Daens and myself participating in the Mobility Window in Tanzania. During my stay, I worked in primary data collection with the duty bearers who were directly related to water services; both technical and political government officials. At the same time, I worked with the baseline data which had already been collected at the start of the project in March 2019. I had the opportunity to work closely with a 'twin student', a Tanzanian student from Mzumbe University, from whom I learned many things about Tanzanian culture, language and daily life. Both of us worked together in cleaning the data

and publishing in [the mwater portal](#), which was later shared with the duty bearers via SMS. The online portal, which consisted of information related to water quality (E.coli), access and issues of different water sources, was critical in order to share the information among the duty bearers. I learnt to use the mwater portal and produce interactive survey results using graphs and maps. Moreover, it was the first time I used the Social Network Analysis (SNA) tool to see how different duty bearers such as district officials and leaders, the ward chair and officials, the village chair, the street chairman and other government officials interacted with each other on topics related to water quality and services. Among many lessons, this was at the top as I had wanted to learn this skill for a long time, ever since I started working in the development sector. Being able to disseminate information on water quality to leaders and officials was another important milestone of this Mobility Window, in addition to understanding their views and community perspectives on the use of

ICT in water monitoring. Furthermore, this experience did not limit me only to learning research skills but also gave me the opportunity to observe and learn about social aspects of Tanzania. I got to know the traditions of their society, food habits and cultural practices as well as other struggles related to basic needs like water, health, sanitation and education. Some nights without electricity and clean water made us realize how fortunate we were to have access to those services. The new delicacies like ugali, cassava, chipsi mayai became our favorite food during our stay. In a nutshell, there are many things to take back from Tanzania and this experience of the Mobility Window. Getting to learn new research skills, being able to use SNA, adapting to and learning about a new culture and expanding your network of friends to other continents are key achievements of the Mobility Window."





Congratz!



Alumna Cassandra Vet (the Netherlands, 2016-17) launched her first [blogpost](#) for the Tax Justice network on the uneven distribution of benefits of institutionalized tax avoidance solutions.



Alumnus Megos Desalegne Gelagay (Ethiopia, 2015-16) jointly with Els Lecoutere published an IOB discussion paper on "[Did conditional cash transfers in the Productive Safety Net Program empower women in Tigray, north-east Ethiopia?](#)"



The 2019 IOB discussion paper "[Can the Logical Framework help to manage change? Perspectives from the field of Security Sector Reform](#)" by Alumnus Daniel Szczeplanski (Belgium, 2014-15) and Tom De Herdt was published.



Alumna Aura Liliana López López (Colombia, 2016-17) and Bert Ingelaere discuss the Missing Link in Hybrid Peacebuilding Localized Peace Trajectories & Endogenous Knowledge in their recent [IOB discussion paper](#).



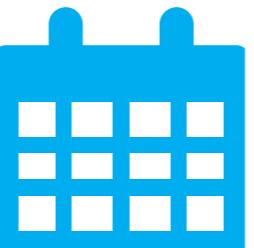
Alumna Kelly Litz (USA, 2016-17) published (together with Nathalie Holvoet) an article on "[Adolescent Dating Violence Among Nicaraguan Youth](#)" in the academic journal Violence against Women.



In a recent IOB policy brief on [Urbanization and dietary change](#) and an [academic article in World and Development](#), IOB alumna Lara Cockx (Belgium, 2012-13), Liesbeth Colen and Joachim De Weerdt discuss the link between urbanization and food consumption in sub-Saharan Africa.



Alumna Jinat Hossain (Bangladesh, 2016-17) published a co-authored article on 'Role of Shaheed Janani Jahanara Imam during War of Liberation and Post-Independent Bangladesh', in the NU Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences & Business Studies.



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IOB Master applications are open!

You have been doing a good job in putting up an IOB poster, forwarding the promotion mail, sharing the facebook add ...in sum, spreading the news the 2020-21 applications for the IOB Master Programmes are open again!! So far already 809 applicants started their application online. But please continue your efforts in advertising the information as we are sure so many people with an excellent profile to become an IOB-sparked change agent do not know about IOB yet! So spread the word, to those who have not yet heard ... about IOB. More info: www.uantwerpen.be/development-studies

South African -regional hub-alumni event

17 April

For the first time, IOB is organizing an alumni event in South Africa. We therefore very warmly invite all South African, but also Zimbabwean, Zambian, Mozambican or other alumni from the South of Africa to join our event. The event will be organised on Friday 17 April and will be hosted by Prof. Danny Cassimon. A formal invitation will still follow. We hope to see you all there!

22 & 29 Feb

Double date in Tanzania!

A double alumni meet and greet event will be organised in Tanzania : one alumni get together in Morogoro on the 22 February at 7 p.m. for the alumni in the vicinity of Morogoro and another alumni get-together in Dar Es Salaam on 29 February at 5 p.m.

Everyone is welcome!

Call for applications for 'Evaluation Capacity Development' training 2020 now open!

The third edition of the "Strengthening National Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities: national evaluation societies as a driving force" training will be organized from 19 until 30 October 2019 at IOB, Antwerp. This two-week evaluation capacity development (ECD) seminar funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation's Special Evaluation Office (SEO) aims to bring together leading evaluation experts (members of National Evaluation Societies, VOPEs) in developing countries to strengthen the ability of those evaluation societies in taking up the role of developing national M&E capacities and use. More specifically, this seminar will enable 25 evaluation experts - who are members or are committed to becoming active members of national evaluation societies - to become driving forces in the strengthening of their own national M&E systems and evaluation societies. Applications are currently open! More info on the ECD website.

More info: www.uantwerpen.be/evaluationsocieties

