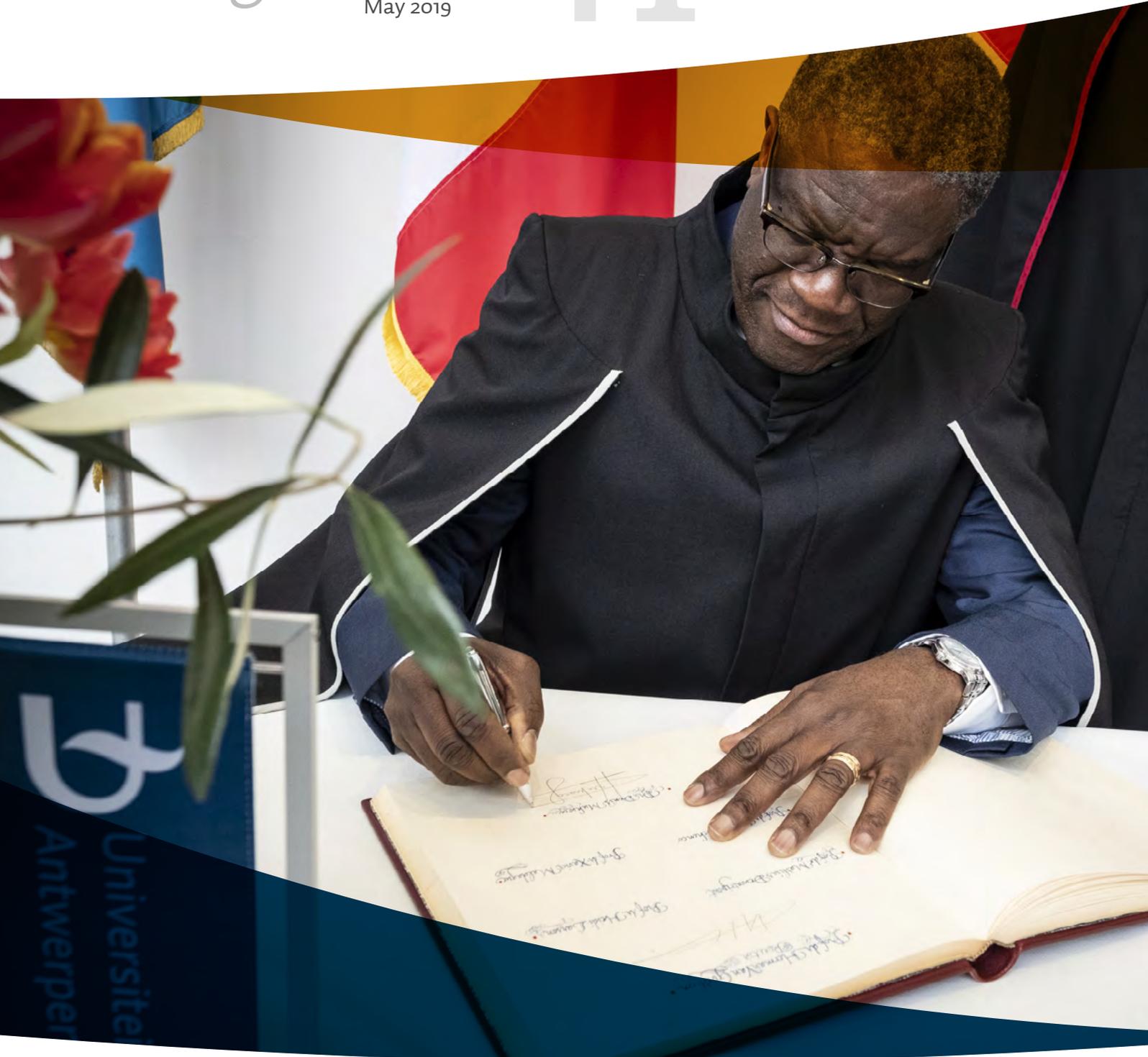


# Exchange to change **Alumni** magazine #41

May 2019



**IOB**  
Institute of Development Policy  
University of Antwerp

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E2C

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Gleiberman, Elizabeth Njoroge, Lisa Popelier  
and Sarah Vancluysen

# Antidote

Do you ever have the feeling that you are very privileged to be doing the kind of work you are doing? While collecting alumni impact stories in Ethiopia, I (once again) was privileged to record so many fascinating stories. The stories were very diverse and the changes that studying at IOB instigated in the alumni varied from opening the graduate's mindset into a global one or boosting their personal and professional confidence, through to broadening the alumni's theoretical horizons as well as learning hands-on research methods skills. Each graduate has his/her own story.

One graduate's story highlighted the confidence built up while studying at IOB, as it was the first time that she was abroad, living alone. Returning home, she felt she could 'take on the world' with the new found confidence, skills and knowledge acquired at IOB. She found a job, very hands-on, being on the road in very rural areas and in difficult circumstances, leading a team ... outside of what used to be her 'comfort zone'... but with a very tangible impact for many farmers throughout the country. Afterwards, she continued to grow throughout her career up to national and even international level, and has been able to make a difference in policy and practice. Another story portrayed how even a short three month stay at IOB had a tremendous impact, when later on, the graduate became Minister of Women's Affairs in Ethiopia and more recently even Speaker of the House and just a few months ago was appointed as Minister of Peace. The implementation of gender budgeting has been placed high on the policy agenda (in Ethiopia), inspired by the input received from IOB training. Yet another IOB graduate explained how studying at IOB gave him the networks, research skills and interest to pursue a PhD, a process in which he deepened both research and analytical skills and knowledge, which he now continues to build on to inform and improve national level policies on agriculture.

IOB graduates are -and have been for many years- lecturing thousands of students, occupying key policy and political positions, and doing research at universities or think tanks ... at home or abroad. Astonishingly, many not only manage to excel at their high profile jobs, while at the same time investing in their family's wellbeing, but even manage to free up time to start up new projects or programmes themselves, in order to improve the lives of the most disadvantaged citizens in their own community.

I can't wait to share these stories with the IOB community...

With the students, when they are struggling with EOMPs, presentations and deadlines ...so they can stop, sit back and remember why they wanted to study at IOB in the first place and let the stories inspire them to find their own different but equally meaningful paths.

With IOB staff, when they are running from meeting to deadline, burdened with bureaucracy, and precisely at the moment when they are wondering what the point is ... to make them realize and discover how their lectures have had a very tangible impact and are being put into practice by former students and are also now affecting other students, people and societies around the globe.

With IOB alumni, when they too are put under strain by the pressure of their professional career, possibly being confronted with difficult life and professional choices ... to show how they are making a real difference in different ways in different parts of the world and how IOB is really proud of their contribution to the IOB development footprint.

Sara Dewachter  
IOB alumni coordinator

# Alumni applause

## In the spotlight!



IOB Alumna Muferiat Kamil (Training Engendering Development, 2006) was inaugurated as Minister of Peace in Ethiopia in October 2018. Muferiat Kamil, previously Ethiopia's first woman speaker of parliament, was inaugurated as the first Peace Minister in an equally historic cabinet. The Ministry of Peace oversees a broad range of departments and responsibilities, among others the National Intelligence & Security Service (NISS); Federal Police Commission & Finance Security & Information Centre; Federal & Pastoralist Development Affairs; National Disaster Risk Management Commission; the Administration for Refugee and Returnee Affairs; Ethiopian Foreign Relations Strategic Studies Institute; and the Main Department for Immigration & Nationality Affairs.



Alumnus Tewelde Gebremariam Adhanom (2015, Ethiopia) successfully obtained a VLIR-UOS award to fund a South Project on '[Gender and Climate Change](#)' (promotor Prof. Nathalie Holvoet). On 10 April the joint research project (University of Gondar and IOB) was launched during an inception workshop at the University of Gondar. The project aims to generate empirical evidence to contribute to the development of evidence-based and gender sensitive agriculture related climate change adaptation strategies for resilient rural development.



Alumnus Mbuih Zukane (2017, Cameroon) has published and presented an article based on the research done at IOB during the Atlantic Dialogues Conference in Marrakesh, Morocco. Additionally, Zukane's project 'Waste for Development' won an award during the same conference. It entails reducing GHGs emissions by curbing the burning of wastes and instead recycling them into many outlets (paper to burning briquettes, plastics to pavements and household waste to produce biogas). Details at [www.icad.org.com](http://www.icad.org.com)



Alumni Frank Ahimbisibwe and Tom Ogwang (2009, Uganda) have successfully been granted a VLIR TEAM project '[Making refugee integration sustainable: in search of durable relations with host populations in Uganda](#)' (promotor Prof. Bert Ingelaere).



## Published!



Alumna Adiam Hagos (2013, Ethiopia) played a key role as team leader of the Ethiopian country team and co-author of the report '[Gender innovation lab: Ethiopia Gender Diagnostic - Building the Evidence Base to Address Gender Inequality in Ethiopia](#)'.



Alumna Aura Liliana López López (2017, Colombia), jointly with Bert Ingelaere, published an IOB discussion paper entitled "[The Missing Link in Hybrid Peacebuilding: Localized Peace Trajectories & Endogenous Knowledge](#)". Aura also presented this paper at the UCSIA conference on peacebuilding.



Alumnus Jorden de Haan (2015, the Netherlands) co-authored UNITAR's "[Handbook for Developing National Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining \(ASGM\) Formalization Strategies within National Action Plans \(NAPs\)](#)", aiming to assist countries to develop (ASGM) formalization strategies targeting NAP-executing countries and agencies, while also being relevant to private sector stakeholders (including financial institutions and LSM companies), non-governmental organizations, universities, donors, and other stakeholders involved in ASGM-related work. Prof. Sara Geenen has also contributed.



The article "Is NGO Peacebuilding Risk-Free? A Case Study on Bangladesh" by alumnus Anurug Chakma (2016, Bangladesh) will be published in the Asian Journal of Peacebuilding in the next November 2019 issue/May 2020 issue. The central thesis of this paper is that NGO peacebuilding, despite being generally effective in the identification of local needs, implementation of development projects and advocacy for human rights, is severely affected by three key risk factors: legitimacy, security and sustainability in the post-conflict society of the CHT.

# At the end of a PhD journey: Frédéric Huybrechs

Frédéric Huybrechs defended his PhD in Development Studies on 30 November 2018 and has kindly agreed to share some thoughts about his PhD journey at IOB with the E2C team and readers.

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

**FH:** In my PhD, I looked into 'green microfinance'. Green microfinance refers to the inclusion of environmental objectives in microfinance, on top of the traditional social and financial ones. As I looked at the current state of knowledge and practice on this topic, I noticed a research gap regarding the underlying assumptions of how such projects define and reach their environmental objectives, and how they interact with the context in which they intervene. To engage with these questions, I adopted a political ecology approach, studying green microfinance's role in environmental governance and trying to understand how it interacts with broader, dynamic and power-laden processes of (rural) development.

For the empirical part of the PhD, I did a case study of a particular green microfinance project: Proyecto CAMBio (which stands for Central-American Markets for Biodiversity). This project took place in Central America and aimed to encourage biodiversity-friendly land-use practices through a combination of (micro)credits, environmentally conditioned payments and technical assistance. My fieldwork focused on the project's implementation by the microfinance institution Fondo de Desarrollo Local in northern-central Nicaragua. A key part of the research was to better understand the development pathways in the research area. In this region, small-scale farmers face pressures from both an exclusionary and input-intensive

approach to coffee production and an increasingly strict approach to nature conservation. In this context, and also linked to broader crises in microfinanced coffee production, Proyecto CAMBio ended up being absorbed into the dominant development pathway, supporting relatively larger farmers and input-intensive coffee production and failing to pay attention to more diversified agroforestry and agricultural practices. I also illustrated how the meaning of what constitutes 'biodiversity-friendly' is malleable and influenced by context, in interaction with existing rules and perceptions of environmental concerns.

The key message is that an intervention like green microfinance provides material and discursive support for a particular view on environment and development, which must be situated in relation to broader guiding ideas and development pathways. Therefore, the financial, monetary and public support for particular practices through 'green' microfinance is not a self-evident nor a neutral or merely technical matter.

## E2C: How did you come up with this research topic of green microfinance (it must have been something rather innovative 7 years ago...)? How do you see the future of green microfinance now that climate change adaptation/mitigation is gaining momentum?

**FH:** During my Masters in Applied Economics and Environment & Development I became increasingly interested in environmental governance,

looking at environmental policies and their particular political and distributional character. I had already worked on Payments for Ecosystem Services, but when I started thinking about a PhD research project, prof. Johan Bastiaensen talked to me about the CAMBio project –which was being implemented by our partner institutions UCA-Nitlapan and FDL in Nicaragua– and the underlying practice of combining microfinance with Payments for Ecosystem Services. It caught my attention and became the cornerstone of the research project.

Regarding the evolution of green microfinance: the uptake of environmental considerations in microfinance (including the foci of climate change mitigation and adaptation) has been slower than I expected; but it is indeed gaining momentum. I fear, however, that it will very much be in line with what I warn of in the PhD, namely that the inclusion of particular environmental objectives will not be much more than a technical add-on to further business-as-usual microfinance.

## E2C: What policy recommendations or advice/lessons for green microfinance to be effective can be drawn from your research?

**FH:** One of the key lessons is that – before you can actually think about effectiveness– the definition of particular (environmental) objectives is in itself a contentious exercise. To be conscious hereof, and to recognize that there is not one particular expert-

led way to define what a 'sustainable' outcome is, is already an important element. Related hereto is the call to engage in local economic and political networks, in order to have a better understanding of which practices are being supported and who is benefiting from them. Lastly, the effectiveness is very difficult to determine in light of the complex ways in which an intervention interacts with the local context, which make it impossible to predict outcomes and attribute them to a given intervention. These are not necessarily very popular recommendations in a context where the common expectation is for you to present certain 'best practices' that can easily be upscaled... Yet the recognition that both the definition of (environmental) objectives and the incidental outcomes are highly dependent on local interactions should not be taken as a pessimistic message.

Rather, it wishes to encourage a more thorough engagement with the realities of local territories and their actors, in order to present a more socially-informed view on which problems and solutions might exist and to have more realistic expectations of the type of 'effectiveness' that can be expected.

## E2C: What did you enjoy the most in your PhD and conversely, what was the most difficult part?

**FH:** Even though there is clear time-pressure (especially towards the end of the funded period) and you inevitably get involved in (too) many projects, tasks and collaborations, it is a unique moment in your (academic) life in which you are given the gift of time to really deeply engage with a particular topic or issue. You can fully focus on research, with (in my case) extended fieldwork and the opportunity to explore different

viewpoints and methodological/epistemological approaches. The great part of this is obviously that you can take the time to explore a particular topic in-depth. The difficult part was not to get lost herein and to find ways to delimitate the scope of the research.

## E2C: You spent quite some time in Nicaragua for your research, can you tell us one anecdote about your stay?

**FH:** One of the anecdotes, which has become a running joke, involves my experiences with the local second-hand car market. After looking for a car in Managua for quite a while, I thought I had found a great bargain. But it turned out not to be... The car eventually spent more time parked outside my house and inside garages than actually being used on the road. It never even made it to my research area. However, it turned out to



Reading landscape inside Macizo de Peñas Blancas

be a great stepping stone to getting to know the (in)formal rules of consumer protection; to make me visit shady car-part markets; and to make me engage actively with the workings of the police and judiciary system. By the way, this anecdote is now also being used as an example in some courses to refer to transaction costs and information asymmetries.

**E2C: How will the current crisis in the country affect your future research work in that area?**

**FH:** This question is more difficult to answer. It's been a year since the openly violent state repression started in April 2018. It is impossible to predict how the current crisis will evolve. First of all, I am worried about how the current situation is affecting friends and colleagues over there. The situation has also made it more complicated to travel for fieldwork as an external researcher/observer and it is difficult to plan ahead. Luckily, we are in regular contact with the local partners of the project I'm currently working on. They are doing a great job wading through the difficult tides of the current political unrest and –even in these difficult times- they remain very involved with this project,

collaboration and topic. We are very curious to see what the outcomes of the current political turmoil will be and whether it might actually open up new opportunities and dynamics in both our research region and topic. At the very least, we have to remain hopeful.

**E2C: If you could give some advice to your younger self at the start of your PhD, what would it be?**

**FH:** I think I could give a great number of suggestions, but I'm not sure my younger self would follow them. Indeed, a number of these pieces of advice were already on my list of good intentions when I started, but sometimes I failed to live up to them. So one tip would be: take advice seriously. One of the things that I would suggest is to have a clearer idea from the start of what the 'end-product' might look like. This can link to discussions regarding paper-based vs monograph format of the final PhD thesis, but more generally also relate to how you plan towards particular goals. The advice, then, would be to actually stick to particular deadlines regarding chapters, working papers and publications (easier said than done, though). Don't be afraid to write and to be open to critique/feedback. Another

piece of advice would have been to say: 'it's fine to engage with many different people, following many different interesting projects and opportunities; but make sure to keep a particular focus and goal in mind and learn to say 'no' once in a while.'

**E2C: To conclude, what contribution or impact do you expect your research to generate academically or societally?**

**FH:** Academically, I hope to have contributed to the way in which green microfinance is being conceptualized and I hope it will inspire further work on the application of political ecology perspectives on (green) microfinance. I am glad that it has already inspired the project that I am currently working on, where we continue delving into the practice of green microfinance in relation to particular development pathways – this time in relation to cattle farming in the north-east of Nicaragua. At a policy level, I hope that our work can continue to be influential through participation in key platforms on how microfinance is being linked to environmental concerns (such as the green finance action groups of large international microfinance networks and development banks).



## FACTS

### Title of your PhD

A political ecology approach to green microfinance: development pathways and avenues for transformative microfinance

### Ongoing/future research activities

I am currently involved in the [TruePATH project](#). TruePATH stands for "Transforming Unsustainable Pathways in agricultural frontiers: articulating microfinance plus with local institutional change for sustainability in Nicaragua." This project is a collaboration between IOB, Agroparistech in France and UCA-Nitlapan in Nicaragua and is funded by the Belmont Forum and NORFACE Joint Research Programme on Transformations to Sustainability. The project addresses the global-local institutional dynamics that generate the socially and environmentally unsustainable cattle development pathway.

### Preferred leisure activity

Most of my time goes to my family, spending time with my girlfriend Kaat and my two wonderful kids Leon and Alice. I also play the guitar in a reggae/ska/worldvibes band named '[The Subtitles](#)' (feel free to look it up on Facebook, Spotify or YouTube). I also really enjoy doing sports (which is currently mostly running).



# New staff at IOB!

## Maria Eugenia Robles Mengoa

| POSITION | FWO-funded PhD student “inForMining”

| RESEARCH | I wrote my thesis dissertation on gender-based violence and masculinities in the informal gold mining community of La Rinconada in Puno, Peru. There I observed issues on crime, sex-trafficking of young girls, domestic violence on women miners, gender segregation, abusive alcohol consumption, and the dynamics and interactions surrounding the mine (myths, human sacrifices, male rituals).

| TRIVIA | My indigenous roots and familiar link to the Aymara culture (Peru/Bolivia) have nurtured me and created a close identity with indigenous communities and their ancient traditions. Unfortunately, I don't speak Aymara, but I can understand some of it! I have a twin sister who is essential in my life. I used to be a dance teacher of Bolivian/Peruvian folklore, latin, hip-hop and contemporary, so if you ever want to go out dancing, I'm the person to call! I (absolutely) love dogs, listen to music, play the Ukulele and travel the world.



## Jean-François Maystadt

| POSITION | Professor, teaching courses related to quantitative methods and to trade and migration

| RESEARCH | I have worked on the role of weather variations for migration in developing countries, and its consequences on the labor markets. I have also investigated quantitatively the impact of refugees on the hosting population in developing countries, together with factors facilitating the integration of refugees in hosting economies.

I have also some interests in intergenerational inequality, the political economy of public spending and infrastructure, the economic impact of sanctions and the resilience to natural disasters.

I would be keen to learn more about text analysis and mixed methods (IOB is the right place!) together with statistical methods for high-dimensional data.

| TRIVIA | Outside of work, I like to spend time with my family (2 kids) and friends. I know, it sounds a bit boring ... I like football (even if I do not play anymore) and I am happy to play squash from time to time.



## Michael Domen

| POSITION | Communications officer

| RESEARCH | I always had a distinct interest in anything to do with international relations, human rights and development. I was lucky enough to be able to do a summer internship at the British Embassy and European Delegation in Tajikistan (2007) and the Belgian Embassy in South Africa (2009). I decided I needed some academic grounding and got my Master's degree in International Peace Studies from Trinity College Dublin in 2011.

| TRIVIA | As far as hobbies go, I'm an avid and voracious reader, making no distinction between fiction (both of the proper literary type and the Dan Brown type), non-fiction or even encyclopaedias. If it's written down, I'll read it. Other than that, I'm a decent swimmer and love long walks, something I intend to do more of, now that I'm starting work at IOB.



## Cassandra Vet

| POSITION | PhD-researcher within the EOS-FWO project ‘Winners and Losers from Globalization and Market Integration’.

| RESEARCH | I grew up in Brussels where I also studied Political Science at the VUB. Here, I first got excited about the politics and political economy of finance when writing my dissertation on the US-China dispute involving the undervaluation of the Chinese currency. At IOB, and after some years of policy-work in the field of youth work and education, I stumbled upon some seemingly surreal pricing mechanisms and their strength to avoid corporate taxation. A topic that brought me to the Zambian mines, to Zürich, and who knows...

| TRIVIA | I unwind by going for a run or a forest hike. My absolute favourite activity is outdoor swimming. Although nothing seems to compare to the after-work lake jumps I had in the middle of the Rocky Mountains. There, I interned at a non-profit working on political transparency and found out that nothing beats the feel of cold mountain water after a day of tagging and categorizing press releases.



## Eliane Giezendanner

| POSITION | FWO PhD Fellow

| RESEARCH | For many years, I've had a particular interest in Africa's Great Lakes Region, in particular Rwanda and Burundi. I hence consider it a huge privilege to now have the opportunity to work on this region in the course of my PhD. My research project under the supervision of Prof. Bert Ingelaere will focus on the reintegration of former FDLR rebels in Rwanda.

| TRIVIA | In my free time, I enjoy cooking and baking, good food and drinks, being in nature, music and exploring new places – which is currently Antwerp...



# Climate change: interview with students Nash Tysmans & Igor Zivkovic



**E2C: What is your name and nationality, and what work/study did you do before IOB?**

**Nash:** I am a Filipina national and I previously worked in Communications in the Ministry of Education in the Office of the President of my country. I also did independent research work for different communities in the Philippines. It has been the most diverse class I have been part of and it is exciting to get to interact with people from all over the world.

**Igor:** I am Belgian with Serbian and Croatian nationalities too. Before IOB, I studied Social and Economic Sciences at the University of Antwerp as well.

**E2C: How has your stay at IOB been so far?**

**Nash:** It has been an interesting experience to discover how different

people from different countries employ their creativity in resolving development issues in their different contexts, especially in the Global South.

**Igor:** The fact that IOB embraces the diversity of students from all over the world has been an interesting experience for me in terms of getting to interact with different cultures.

**E2C: Where did you grow up? Were you always passionate about climate? How does it feel to be part of these protests? Are the protests also taking place in your country?**

**Nash:** I grew up in a small town in the mountainous region of the Philippines. While growing up I had a clear sense of nature because my grandparents would always ensure I played outside in nature. Eventually I got enrolled in a college in the capital, Manila, which had a focus on women's rights in connection with social justice. This helped me take environmental principles seriously and realize that everything in this world is interconnected, hence my passion to give back to the community and the world at large as an individual. The protests are taking place in my country but in very specialized ways and more specific to the

privatization of public land, land use and anti-mining issues.

**Igor:** I grew up in Belgium and I have joined the protests in Brussels quite a number of times. It's a different and nice feeling to interact with much younger students in fighting for policies that combat climate change.

**E2C: Do you agree that the student strikes are indicative of a new type of revolution within climate change protests? What is so different to previous (climate) protests?**

**Nash:** The fact that these protests are youth led make them more unique and since I am always passionate about young people's involvement in development, my participation was to get a feel for their thinking and actions behind these protests. I also feel that young people also bring to the table ideas and youthful energy to do things that adults may not be willing to engage with, thereby making it unique.

**Igor:** Yes I definitely think it's a new approach given that some NGO's are also embracing student protests, abandoning the old type of lobbying that they used before. The fact that students are also willing to sacrifice and choose civil disobedience actions like abandoning school, risking punishment to support the climate change protests also shows how people are more dedicated than in previous protests.

**E2C: Do you think this new type of climate change student strikes are having more impact than the previous climate change campaigns?**

**Nash:** I think they have a strong impact in terms of urgency, considering some students are sacrificing a lot to skip school in order to push for change through these protests.

**Igor:** The fact that the young students all together decide not to go to school in order to join the climate change protests sends a very strong signal to politicians that people are now prepared to go further in combating this issue.

**E2C: What do you feel needs to be included or what needs to happen for these campaigns to yield better results?**

**Nash:** I feel that the idea of inclusiveness in the protests is very important as it brings together people of different generations, for example senior citizens and families, who are also affected in their different unique ways. However, I feel that in order for these protests to be successful, it has to be clear what the demands are and what they are pushing for in terms of climate change. I think it would be really nice if the education system also integrated climate change issues in the curriculum to enhance critical thinking around this issue. Finally, I feel that it's important that students in IOB coming from development expertise and interests also participate more, since this issue affects us all.

**Igor:** Looking forward to the future, I feel there has been some progress since climate change has been included in the political agenda. I feel like the next step of these protests would be to institutionalize them in terms of structures, have action plans and build

alliances with other groups like trade unions and pensioners. Finally, I think it would be important for protesters to maintain neutrality by avoiding the left wing and right wing ideology and focusing mainly on the specific problems in order to combat this issue more efficiently.



# In the meantime...

## Honorary doctorate

On 4 April, Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Denis Mukwege was warmly welcomed by the University of Antwerp to be awarded an honorary degree for general merit. The honorary title pays tribute to his expertise and accomplishments in the field of gynaecology and maternal healthcare, and more specifically his actions with regard to sexual violence as founder and director of Panzi Hospital in Bukavu, DRC.

In his master class, Dr. Mukwege explained that as the number of rape victims arriving at Panzi Hospital increased, he realized that medical services alone would not solve the problem. "You can't operate against violence," he says. "You can only abolish it." Together with the Yazidi activist Nadia Murad, Dr. Mukwege received the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize for his "efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict."

At Panzi Hospital, Dr. Mukwege has provided medical care and surgery for thousands of survivors of sexual violence in his country. Moreover, through his efforts to bring the topic to the attention of international organisations and demand that those responsible for sexual violence be brought to justice, he has become a leading activist for human rights and gender equality.



## A trip to the city of light



This year's trip to Paris fell a few days before the start of spring, giving the IOB students a wonderful experience welcoming spring away from home in the City of Love!

The 2019 Paris experience kicked off on Sunday 17 March when the students left Antwerp to arrive in Paris at about 1.30pm. What followed was an interesting River Seine boat tour during which the students were able to learn the historical meaning of various buildings and sculptures along the Seine. Among them was the world famous Eiffel Tower which was directly overlooking the Seine, giving students the opportunity to take beautiful and memorable pictures while on the boat's rooftop. After the end of the boat tour the students headed off for the hotel check-in and then relaxation.

The second day in Paris started off quite early with the students leaving for the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), an intergovernmental economic organisation that designs policies that promote the economic and social well-being of people around the world. The students got a taste of the role of the OECD delegation and its work in Development Evaluation and Peer Reviews and later socialized over a delicious lunch at the premises. Then, having finished the program by noon, they had free time to tour the city's special delights; notably the Palais du Louvre museum (the world's largest art museum) to spot the famous Mona Lisa painting by Leonardo da Vinci, the Sacré-Cœur church atop the hill of Montmartre, the Arc de Triomphe, the cathedral of Notre-Dame, the Moulin Rouge, known for its special show, and finally the famous Eiffel Tower named after the engineer Gustave Eiffel, who designed and built the tower. The students also had the opportunity to experience Paris by night, sampling various French dishes such as les Escargots à la Bourguignonne, and dancing the night away at various entertainment spots in Paris.

The third and final day commenced early with a guided tour through UNESCO buildings and artworks. Later there were presentations by UNESCO staff on Evaluation at UNESCO and their operational study on youth. The trip was wrapped up with lunch at UNESCO's 7th floor, with a view of the Eiffel Tower. Indeed, the success of this trip is in how it touched the hearts of the students in a special way, with memories from the City of Love they will forever cherish!

# More new staff at IOB!

## Cyril Owen Brandt

**| POSITION |** Postdoctoral researcher working on an ODI project together with Prof. Tom De Herdt and Sarah Thontwa.

**| RESEARCH |** During my PhD at the University of Amsterdam I explored dynamics around the (non-)identification of teachers in the DRC. Prior to working on education and the DRC, I worked in a center for young refugees in Paris, conducted research on microfinance in Benin and Bangladesh, and worked on governance of natural resources in Peru. Which is why my favorite dish is Ceviche (and anything with samourai sauce).

**| TRIVIA |** Outside of academia, I am a trainer for anti-racism/critical whiteness with the German association Phoenix. Also, with some friends I am developing a form of everyday competitive altruism, what we call "moral games". My home is currently in Münster (Germany), so I will be travelling between Münster, Antwerp and Kinshasa quite frequently. I am a big fan of board games and squash, neither of which I play all too regularly...



## Simon Marijsse

**| POSITION |** PhD-researcher within the EOS-FWO project 'Winners and Losers from Globalization and Market Integration'.

**| RESEARCH |** I'll mainly focus on technology adoption & transfers in artisanal mining in the DR Congo under supervision of Sara Geenen.

**| TRIVIA |** In my spare time I love to read a lot, run a lot, and eat a lot (order may vary). I'm an avid fan of coffee, American literature, cinema, and long distance sports. In a not so distant past I taught table tennis and worked as a fjord and glacier guide in Norway – however, that career is currently on hold.

## Boris Verbrugge

**| POSITION |** Part-time post-doc involved in an FWO-funded research project on 'The informalization of gold mining', together with Sara Geenen.

**| RESEARCH |** I spend the rest of my week working as a senior researcher at HIVA (KU Leuven), where I am involved in policy-oriented research on issues related to decent work, social protection, and the informal sector.

**| TRIVIA |** In my spare time, I enjoy cycling and spending time in my caravan (trailer sounds a bit trashy) in the Ardennes.



## René Rodríguez Fabilena

**| POSITION |** BOF (DOCPRO, Global Minds) PhD student.

**| RESEARCH |** In 2015 I started working as a research assistant at the Nitlapan Research Institute within the research line on the Governance of Land and Natural Resources shared by Nitlapan and IOB. The subjects included the inheritance of the land from a gender perspective and the political dimension of Payments for Ecosystem Services (PES), the latter under the supervision of Prof. Gert van Hecken, who is now my PhD supervisor. This experience inspired me to apply for the IOB Master in Globalization & Development in 2017.

My PhD aims to understand how power relations and cultural diversity shape the social-ecological outcomes of Payments for Ecosystem Services.

**| TRIVIA |** I enjoy spending time in the mountains of Nicaragua, either walking around them or resting in a hammock listening to the murmur of nature (except the mosquitoes of course). I love poetry as a form of liberation of the spirit and as a political weapon. I love going to trova (Latin American music genre) and jazz music concerts. I play chess and I like to discover board games and strategy games. I am interested in political activism that I have been involved in since I was 16 years old.



## Fergus Michael Willian O'Leary Simpson

**| POSITION |** FWO-funded PhD student.

**| RESEARCH |** My primary interest lies in challenges at the intersection of the environment and development in sub-Saharan Africa. If I retain enough sanity to survive the next four years, I hope to develop a new perspective of small-scale mining communities in eastern DRC. The research project will deploy a mixed-methods approach and draw on concepts from political ecology and socio-ecological resilience.

**| TRIVIA |** When I'm not looking perplexed in room 216, you can probably find me strumming my guitar, attempting to sing in tune or maniacally jogging around town.

## Réginas Ndayiragije

**| POSITION |** Research assistant and IOB alumnus.

**| RESEARCH |** Concerning my academic and professional track records, I initially studied philosophy. Later, I studied psychology. I also have a degree in Human Rights and an Advanced Masters' degree in Governance and Development from the University of Antwerp. Just after my degree in Psychology, I did a 6 month internship as a journalist at RPA (Radio Publique Africaine), a local radio and spent five months in the UNDP's Peace and Governance Unit as a young expert. From September 2014 to 2017, I worked in a regional CENAP/ Interpeace joint program as a researcher. That program included trans-border dialogue and research as strategies for peacebuilding in the African Great Lakes region. My academic interests are power sharing (its effects and perceptions at community level), state engineering, peacebuilding, reconciliation after high intensity conflicts and community strategies to overcome a long legacy of conflicts.

**| TRIVIA |** During my spare time, I enjoy reading, swimming and jogging.



# DRC: Prospects for Democracy?

*Martin Fayulu in conversation with Filip Reyntjens*

**On 14 March, the Great Lakes of Africa Centre (GLAC) of the IOB hosted Congolese presidential candidate Martin Fayulu in conversation with emeritus professor Filip Reyntjens. Fayulu is considered by many international observers to be the real winner in DRC's recent presidential race, in which Félix Tshisekedi was officially declared the winner amid controversy and reports of irregularities.**

**The event was well-attended, and the packed auditorium included many members of the Congolese diaspora currently living in Belgium and the Netherlands. Fayulu's entrance was greeted with enthusiastic applause and cheers, a strong sign that he was amongst supporters; however, before commencing the interview, Reyntjens was careful to remind the audience that this was intended to be an academic discussion, and not a political rally. The discussion afforded Fayulu the opportunity to speak at length about various key moments in the contested elections, punctuated with some more lighthearted moments that revealed his sharp wit. Below, we highlight some of the important points made during the evening.**



## The Geneva Agreement

The run-up to the election was preceded by much debate about which of the opposition candidates would be most likely to emerge victorious against Kabila's chosen candidate, the relatively unknown and unpopular politician Emmanuel Ramazani Shadary. In November 2018, seven opposition leaders seeking the candidacy met in Geneva to select one candidate behind whom they would all unite. Fayulu recalled his efforts to convince the group that they should choose this candidate by consensus rather than voting; but, ultimately,

the others preferred a vote. The seven men agreed that they would abide by the outcome of the vote and either throw their support behind the selected candidate or permanently retire from politics. Fayulu recounted to the audience that he won the vote. "I was there; I think that vote, at least, was transparent" he chuckled, eliciting good-natured laughter from the audience.

Yet within twenty-four hours, two of the seven leaders had defected from the Geneva Agreement. One of the defectors was Vital Kamerhe, a former Kabila ally turned opposition leader.

The other was Félix Tshisekedi, who then entered the presidential race.

## Irregularities

The process of registering voters and then tallying the votes cast was fraught with irregularities and accusations of fraud, including the presence of fake names in the voter registration lists and the misuse of voting machines. Despite this, conduct at the polls reflected the aspiration of free and fair elections. Fayulu argued that this had to do with maintaining politically savvy optics: "They [the ruling party] wanted to have a good election. They wanted it to appear good." Yet despite the orderliness of the elections (that is, people were able to cast their votes without being harassed or scared away) Fayulu maintained that "It went well physically, but [the ruling party] didn't accept the results of the Congolese – they fabricated them."

## "How can they prefer peace and stability to the truth?"

In the aftermath of the election debacle, Fayulu remains incredulous of the reaction of the international community. In spite of many election observers arguing that Fayulu should have been declared the victor, many countries have accepted the outcome favoring Tshisekedi, albeit grudgingly. According to the speakers, this has more to do with international fears of sparking new violence in Congo, not actual recognition of legitimacy—what Fayulu wryly referred to as France's attitude of 'le compromis africain'. Fayulu remained indignant, and chastised various heads of state and the African Union: "I am astounded by the international community...How can they prefer peace and stability to the truth?" He compared the situation to that of Venezuela, in which dozens of countries have thrown their support behind opposition leader Juan Guaidó. Fayulu drew attention to what he sees as a double standard: "We [Congolese] want to be in the same world, with the same values. Democracy should be the same everywhere."

## Moving Forward

While a recount would be ideal, Fayulu explained that this is practically impossible as many ballots were not saved, and reports have disappeared. Instead, he argued in favor of a fresh election, once the electoral records have been properly sanitized and the registration lists are complete and correct. This, however, is unlikely to happen. The international community has accepted Tshisekedi, though various heads of state have allegedly encouraged Tshisekedi to "emancipate" himself from Kabila and open up the government. "I pity Tshisekedi," Fayulu noted, "He went to Nairobi, and Macron and Kenyatta are telling him the results are contested and contestable. You are not the president, you have been nominated. You are a puppet." When Reyntjens asked whether he would accept a coalition in the case that Tshisekedi were to open up the government to Lamuka, Fayulu was succinct: "The answer is no."



In the meantime, Fayulu continues to reach out to the Congolese diaspora, and to promote his political program. This includes allocating more budget share to education, and encouraging students to pursue fields that will help develop the tourism and agriculture sectors: "In Congo everyone goes into political science or journalism. What about agriculture? Why are we importing 2/3 of what we eat?" He noted further that Rwanda, with which Congo shares a border, brought in USD 450 million in tourism, mainly centered on the mountain gorillas.

With a smile and a wink he added, "But they're our gorillas!"

# Alumni panel

## Joseph Gana Zanyine ITP PRSP 2006 | Cameroon

**Where do you work?** I am the director in charge of Revenue Enhancement, Ministry of Finance, working on Fiscal Policy (Tax and budgeting). Working to bring out policies that are implemented in the mobilization of revenue and ensuring the proper allocation of these revenue or resources to ensure economic growth, improve the business environment and above all the well-being of the population.

**How did the IOB experience affect your life/ career?** I acquired great knowledge and skills on the importance of proper public resource allocation, pro-poor budgeting and the importance of proper budgetary allocation to contribute in economic growth and the improvement of the well-being of the population. The role played by nongovernmental actors in the budgeting process and resource allocation is extremely important. My training at IOB helped me to understand the NGOs as essential partners' macroeconomic and public financial management in general and in achieving poverty reduction through the budgeting process in particular without leaving out the implication of gender concerns in the Public Financial Management (PFM). This has been very important in diversifying my experience as a PFM agent.



## Dr. Mst. Esmat Ara Begum DEM 2007 | Bangladesh

**Where do you work?** I am working for a Research Institution that works in the development of the agricultural sector. As a senior researcher I am solving problems related to agricultural economics, whilst also designing, planning, executing and evaluating projects.

**How did the IOB experience affect your life/ career?** IOB gave me insight into handling problems, learned me to work patiently, and changed my mind to work in a group. Furthermore it developed my career.

**If you were the director of a research fund, what is a research question that you would agree to finance?**

Currently I am directing a research project funded by GOB for investigating the adoption status of farm mechanization and it's impact on farmers' and service providers' livelihoods. I am also working on empowering women and on obstacles that women face in my country.



## El Allassane Baguia DEM 2005-2006 | Côte d'Ivoire

**Where do you work?** I am working as a SDGs Programme Specialist for United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Policy and Strategy Unit.

**How did the IOB experience affect your life/ career?** IOB experience affected my recruitment in charge of the policy and strategy.

**What book/ project / blog/ website/ documentary did you recently come across and was 'eye-opening' for you?**

Analysis of the effectiveness of external financing in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



## Helen Bahru Gameda DEM 2006-2007 | Ethiopia

**Where do you work?** I am working for the Belgian Embassy in Addis Ababa.

**How did the IOB experience affect your life/ career?** As a person living in a developing country, my eyes see a lot of poverty and inequality. The study increased my passion for the development of my country. I contribute towards poverty reduction through little deeds here and there. I believe no contribution is little.

**What book/ project / blog/ website/ documentary did you recently come across and was 'eye-opening' for you?**

I have been reading a book lately – 'Walk out Walk on' – a learning journey into communities daring to live the future now. The book covers seven communities around the world, meeting people who have walked out of limiting beliefs and assumptions and walked on to create healthy and resilient communities. The journey will take you to Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Zimbabwe, India, Greece and the United States. The intervention does not follow the usual project approaches of development or formalities ....it reaches out to communities in a very nice way – I liked it very much. I recommend it to all development professionals – the authors are Margaret Wheatley and Deborah Frieze.



# Mobility Window

In the framework of the IOB Going Global programme, three IOB students Jimena Corzo (Peru), Britt Dutour (The Netherlands) and Janne Bemelmans (Belgium) were selected by the South partner and IOB staff to participate in the Mobility Window programme. Mobility Window is a six week research internship offered as a subunit in the first module of the IOB Master programme. Instead of learning a new research method during class, students are enabled by this programme to apply their knowledge of research methods as a co-researcher in an existing research project at one of the partner universities.

Jimena and Britt were invited to join two projects at Mzumbe University in Tanzania, respectively on mobile community monitoring of rural water sources and social

networks' influence on climate change adaptation. Janne Bemelmans traveled to the Philippines to work on a project on the impact of international labour migration on education of children left behind. Ideally, the Mobility Window programme should be a win-win project, allowing IOB students to learn to apply research skills and experience intercultural professional exchanges, while the South project should be able to benefit from the additional student's input into the research project.

The three students seemed to agree that even though there were quite some challenges it was a worthwhile experience that gave them new perspectives and insights you do not learn from books.



Jimena

"1500 people live in Lugono, the village I visited. Their only source of water is a single water pump that was built by missionaries ten years ago. If it is ruined, women and children, traditionally responsible for fetching water, will have to walk much more than the 3 km they currently walk every day to get water to live. In Tanzania, in 2010 just a little more than 50 % of the population had access to a safe water source. In rural areas just 44 %. Eight years later and millions invested, really not much has changed."

Janne

"At De La Salle University (Manilla) I was introduced to the Community Based Monitoring System by Prof. Alellie Sobreviñas and I have experienced first-hand how research can inform local development. Moreover I worked in a multicultural environment and learned how to network. I would highly recommend future students to apply for the research internship, as it broadens your perspective and gives you the opportunity to put theory in practice."

Britt

"During my research in Tanzania I faced a couple of challenges. However, these provided me with a lot of new knowledge and insights on doing research and in particular, doing research in a development context. I gained a lot of new information that I will hopefully be able to use in further research whether it is in an academic, government, business or (I)NGO setting."

The two students at Mzumbe University also got to know some people at an orphanage nearby. They asked their friends and fellow students to support the crowdfunding project and were able to provide the 53 children with health insurance, new school uniforms and a wheelchair and special shoes for children with difficulties to walk.



# in the meantime...

## Ethiopia Alumni Event

At last ... on 5 April 2019, the first ever IOB alumni event was organized in Ethiopia! From 4 p.m. onwards, Ethiopian IOB alumni were invited to the Intercontinental Hotel for the get together. Some thirty alumni and Belgian development actors participated in the event. After a first 'tour de table' it became clear that the alumni came from many different sectors and occupied key positions within the Ethiopian development landscape. The presentation brought the alumni up to speed on the latest news at IOB and future research and alumni activities in Ethiopia. Alumni were also invited to participate in the alumni barometer study by sharing their 'Impact story', about how studying in Antwerp has had an impact on their personal and professional lives. The reception was opened with a speech by Ambassador Annick Van Calster, Director General for bilateral affairs at the Belgian Foreign Affairs, in the presence of the Ambassador for Belgium in Ethiopia, François Dumont, and the director for Relations with sub-Saharan Africa. After the reception, old friendships were renewed and new contacts were made during the alumni dinner. The election of the president and executive team for the Ethiopian alumni chapter concluded the evening.

**5 April**



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