

EXCHANGE TO CHANGE

ECHANGER POUR CHANGER

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**HUMAN CAPITAL,
AGRICULTURAL
PRODUCTIVITY AND
RATIONALITY OF
FARMERS:
AN EMPIRICAL STUDY
IN RURAL HAITI
APPLYING THE
“DATA ENVELOPMENT
ANALYSIS” APPROACH**

**DIATOU DIOP:
“LAISSEZ NOUS MOURIR
OU SURVIVRE PAR
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OF DUBAI:
A LEGEND SOON?**

**‘VISIBILITY’ HIGH ON
THE AGENDA OF BOTH
THE EC AND THE UN**



University
of Antwerp



INSTITUTE OF DEVELOPMENT
POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

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Your Voice

One year has passed since Robrecht Renard took over from Filip Reyntjens as chairperson of the Institute. The changes to the Master’s programmes that were prepared with Filip Reyntjens at the helm have been successfully implemented by the whole IOB team under the capable guidance of Robrecht Renard. An evaluation is to be found in this issue. Students and alumni played an active role in the assessment through focus groups and questionnaires.

IOB aims at strengthening the ties with its alumni. Your input is much appreciated. Listening to you is a great way to keep in touch with the development field. In addition, we would like to promote the exchange of ideas among alumni themselves. To this effect we have created a blackboard on our site. After all, we are all giving the best of ourselves in our common struggle for true development cooperation.

We look forward to hearing from many of you.

Eva Vergaelen 

From the Chair

When you read this message, a new generation of students will have joined IOB and started in one of the three Master's programmes, whereas the students of the 2007-2008 promotion will have left. The transition ceremony during which we close one academic year and open another is an important moment in the annual IOB calendar. This year the crucial date was September 24th - some of the photos taken at the ceremony have been posted on the IOB website. On the personal level I must admit that bidding farewell to a group of students I have helped train and got to know well in the process, while at the same time welcoming a new, totally unfamiliar group, is a moving experience. I am sure that the Master's students among the alumni have vivid memories of these ceremonies, of the day they arrived at IOB, and even more, of the day they graduated.

Emotions aside, we at IOB heaved a sigh of relief when this academic year was over. Frankly, it was a tough one for us. All three Master's programmes had undergone major revisions, partly as regards content, but especially as regards format and organisation, and this was the first year in which all these promising new approaches and concepts had to be put to the test. For all IOB staff, both academic and secretarial, this meant adapting to novel practices and settling into new habits. But we have succeeded beyond all our expectations and I do not think that the 2007-2008 students have suffered from being the guinea pigs for our curriculum reform, on the contrary. The new academic year by comparison will only see minor changes and adaptations and consequently the overall 'transition costs' will be considerably lower.

There is more news on the education front. For the sixth year in a row we organised a successful 5-week training programme on 'Governing for Development' in the spring of 2008. During the new academic year 2008-2009 we will organise the same short programme again but much earlier in the academic year, in January-February to be preci-

se, so as to have it coincide with the second module in the Master's programme and thus provide better opportunities for joint sessions and exchanges between the Master students and the participants in the training programme. Another short-term training programme, one on 'the Political Economy of the Great Lakes Region', will be organised for the first time. It will also coincide with a module in the Master's programme, in this case starting in April 2009.

And so we keep changing and adapting. The same goes for the faces we see around us at IOB. As time moves on staff departures inevitably occur and new staff are being hired. The changeover usually takes place at the start of the new academic year. Two of our respected and capable collaborators have come to the end of their six-year contracts. Ben D'Exelle successfully obtained a PhD at Maastricht University in the Netherlands and is no longer an 'assistant' on our staff. The same goes for Jos Vaessen, who will submit his PhD dissertation at Utrecht University, also in the Netherlands, during the coming months. Another IOB collaborator, Eva Palmans, is also about to defend her PhD thesis. I am sure you will join me in wishing them the very best for their future careers.

Robrecht Renard, Chairman





Human Capital, Agricultural Productivity and Rationality of Farmers:

an Empirical Study in Rural Haiti Applying the “Data Envelopment Analysis” Approach

Sergot Jacob recently obtained his PhD in development economics at the University of Auvergne CERDI-CNRS and the University Antilles Guyane CEREGMIA in France. Sergot is an engineer in agro-economics and has a supplementary degree in economic and social planning. He obtained his master's degree in Development Evaluation and Management at IOB in 1999. Sergot has ten years of working experience both as a researcher and a consultant. He has been involved in research projects, mainly of the University of Quisqueya in Haiti and the Francophone Institute for Management in the Caribbean. As a consultant he has worked for various institutions, ministries and international organisations. We interviewed him about his PhD.



Sergot Jacob, Haiti,
Development Evaluation
and management,
1999 - 2000

Briefly, what is your research about?

Despite a constant decline accelerated by the dismantling of tariff barriers in the 80s and 90s, agriculture continues to play an important role in the Haitian economy. It makes up a large share of GDP (25%), total employment (50%), food needs of the population (46%), and - to a lesser extent- exports (5.5%). It remains the largest source of income for small farmers. In my research I use a unique primary dataset that I collected in 2006 from a representative sample of 815 selected farms in three geographical departments. I examine in two stages (1) productive efficiency and (2) the factors linked to human capital, expanded to include the family and society. The empirical results show that on average productive efficiency amounts to 21.45% and that only 3% of the farmers are operating at the efficiency level, indicating very difficult access to technology but also the existence of great potential productivity in this diversified subsistence agriculture. Several factors, including cultural and religious heritage (for example with regard to the family and social human capital) and an inadequate institutional and technico-economic environment reduce farmers' efficiency, while on the producers' side general and specific human capital (education, experience

and training), good integration into the local economy, location, remittances and access to institutions in particular have the most decisive and the most positive impact on efficiency. In my research I also explore the microeconomic determinants of income diversification strategies - rural non-farm activities (non-agricultural self-employment, non-agricultural wage employment), remittances, and agricultural wage employment - adopted by farmers in their fight for survival.

What is your main contribution to existing research?

My research adds a new dimension to the literature on productive efficiency in that it quantifies the impact of cultural and ethical variables and shows the mechanisms by which they operate. The results are robust to the inclusion of a wide range of control variables and the use of alternative econometric methods. I also provide empirical evidence for the essential role of human capital (education and training) as the main determinant of more profitable income strategies. Moreover, I show that poverty changes the options for a subgroup of farmers forced to sell their labour to the richest farmers in order to obtain additional income. In this logic, social capital plays an indirect and positive role. I have

“Haiti is a wonderful country, but one that is facing major problems. My goal is to understand the different strata of this country better in order to improve its development.”

paid attention to new econometric techniques and the issue of the validity and relevance of the exogenous instruments used.

Why did you choose this topic?

Evaluation has been my field of interest for many years, which is also the reason why I opted for Development Evaluation and Management at IOB. With a background in agro-economic engineering and economic planification, I opted for a thesis in the field of development economics. I measured the effect of human capital on the productive efficiency of farmers, while trying to broaden the conventional understanding of the term human capital to include aspects that are often neglected by other researchers, such as know-how which is passed on from generation to generation. Haiti is a wonderful country, but one that is facing major problems. My goal is to understand the different strata of this country better in order to improve its development.

What is the role of human capital in generating more profitable income strategies?

Besides agricultural revenues which account for more than 50% of the total exploitation revenues, my research shows that farmers also generate revenues from other sources, namely money transfers by migrants and revenues from non-agricultural activities, such as self employment and paid work, which amount to 29% and 27% respectively. A close examination of what determines these revenues reveals that only the most educated farmers have access to these other sources. Thus human capital provides them with a better understanding of the economic environment and makes it possible for them to take greater risks. It also enables them to invest more in the human capital of their children and in their migration. Once the latter grow up they send money to their families at home. The other group of farmers, especially those who are tenants

or migrants with less education, do not have the same access to these revenues.

Can you give an example of the impact of cultural variables on productive efficiency?

The study of the relation between culture and economics goes back a long way, to Adam Smith to be precise. But as regards empirical evidence I have noticed a gap in the literature at the micro-economic level. With my research I hope to contribute to filling that gap. That is why I have included a number of cultural indicators and tried to measure their impact on productive efficiency. This has enabled me to observe, for example, a fatalistic way of thinking among Haitian farmers. As a result of always having been victims of inefficient economic and agricultural policies, they no longer have any faith in governmental institutions. Farmers no longer believe that their problems can be solved, which impacts on their productivity because they do not tend to innovate or take risks.

What are the most important recommendations to be made to agricultural policy makers?

The empirical results are clear. Politicians have to make a minimum of general human capital accessible to all and have to create and nurture opportunities for farmers in the form of, for instance, institutions, social capital, macro-economic policy and infrastructure. Agricultural policy and rural development must focus more on the key factors which determine the productive efficiency of operators but also on strategies for alternative incomes, which play a crucial role in the survival of households and the management of natural and economic income shocks.





Diatou Diop: “laissez nous mourir ou survivre par nous-mêmes.”

Diatou Diop, née au Sénégal, vit depuis 15 ans en Belgique et se prépare maintenant pour partir aux Etats-Unis avec son mari et sa fille, ou elle va continuer son travail comme “ SAP Process Designer” à Cargill. On a eu encore la chance de parler avec cette femme qui a trouvé son propre chemin pour arriver à être soi-même, une femme qui a une vision pour le futur de l’Afrique.



Diatou Diop, Sénégal,
Administration Publique et
Politique du Développement,
1989 - 1992

Mon ambition était de partir au Canada pour faire un MBA après mes études de sciences économiques au Sénégal. Pour ça il fallait une expérience professionnelle et j’ai commencé immédiatement après mes études à travailler dans une multinationale française au Sénégal. Au moment de partir pour le Canada j’ai constaté qu’on avait remplacé mon nom au dernier moment ; je suppose que c’était un cas de corruption, parce que je n’ai jamais pu avoir une explication. Et puis une année je suis allée en vacances à Paris et j’ai visité une amie qui habite ici à Anvers et son mari faisait le programme à l’IOB. Ça me semblait très intéressant et j’ai envoyé ma candidature. Quand je me suis renseignée pour savoir si j’étais sélectionnée, la réponse était : “Désolé, mais il n’y a pas de filles pour le Sénégal, il n’y a que un monsieur qui s’appelle Khadidiatou Diop.” Donc ils avaient pris mon nom comme un nom de garçon, bien que mon nom vienne du nom de la première femme du Profète Mohamed, une femme forte qui jouait un rôle économique important. J’ai répondu : “Bon, être monsieur me convient aussi.”

A l’IOB il y avait plusieurs nationalités et ces échanges étaient des plus intéressants pour moi. J’ai aussi beaucoup apprécié tous les efforts de l’IOB et de l’AGCD pour nous familiariser à la vie en Europe. On a fait beaucoup des voyages d’études dans de nombreux pays Européens et on a visité beaucoup d’institutions et d’universités internationales. Venant d’un pays en développement j’ai vu le fonctionnement des institutions comme la Banque Mondiale et le FMI, mais je n’ai jamais vraiment compris les mécanismes de l’aide au développement, les motivations derrière l’aide et les intérêts de certaines puissances économiques soupçonnées de soutenir les guerres en Afrique. C’est en suivant le cours sur l’économie de la guerre à l’IOB que j’ai réalisé qu’il

existe une industrie de guerre et qu’il y travaille un grand nombre de personnes et que des découvertes scientifiques importantes ont été initiées par l’industrie de l’armement. Du coup, j’ai compris que l’éthique que je recherchais est relayée au second plan derrière les intérêts économiques et stratégiques de certains pays.

Le programme de l’IOB m’a aidé à mieux comprendre les forces économiques et politiques au niveau international. Par exemple comment fonctionne l’aide au développement ? Comment moi, comme jeune génération, je suis amenée à payer les dettes des générations antérieures au Senegal ? Pourquoi dois-je payer sans jamais avoir vu les réalisations de l’usage de cette aide ? Parce que l’aide en général n’est pas de l’aide inconditionnelle. On donne de l’aide financière pour construire une autoroute, mais les machines doivent être achetées au pays donateur. Ajouté à la corruption qui existe chez nous, il ne restait qu’un petit pourcentage du budget pour construire cette autoroute. Je suis très vite arrivée à la conclusion suivante : que l’occident nous laisse nous débrouiller puisqu’il n’existe pas de mécanisme efficaces de garantie de la bonne utilisation de l’aide. Comme Africaine qui aime l’Afrique et qui pense au futur de l’Afrique le seul message que j’ai c’est : ARRETEZ L’AIDE. Laissez nous mourir ou survivre par nous-mêmes. L’essentiel des initiatives dans la coopération au développement induit, de par leur nature, une forme d’assistance permanente. Du fait du manque de relais pas les locaux pour continuer durablement l’assistance initiale, ces aides sont amenés à se prolonger ou à se dissoudre progressivement. Les Africains qui ont ce savoir-faire ont souvent peur d’être la victime de ce jeu et préfèrent émigrer quand ils ont l’opportunité.

Je crois que cette diaspora peut jouer un rôle important dans le développement économique de l'Afrique, mais malheureusement les initiatives sont individuelles et dispersées. A ce moment il existe un nombre impressionnant de ce type d'initiatives privées sans coopération entre elles. Moi aussi je m'étais engagée avec un autre collègue sénégalais de l'IOB et des Flamands de bonne volonté dans une ONG appelée "Jongeren voor jongeren" signifiant "Jeunesse pour la jeunesse" avec le but de construire des écoles dans des villages au Senegal. On avait organisé des activités culturelles pour ressembler de l'argent. Nos collègues flamands dans leur bonté et confiance aveugles ont remis une somme importante à une personne de contact sur place pour démarrer les premiers travaux. On n'a jamais vu la couleur des murs de l'école. Il reconnut plus tard qu'il en a fait usage personnel. On en a voulu à nos amis d'avoir fait preuve de naïveté tout en comprenant ce qui les a induit en erreur. Beaucoup d'initiatives meurent parce qu'on ne connaît pas la réalité. Il ne faut jamais faire quelque chose sans impliquer des locaux de confiance. Je reconnais tout de même que ces initiatives de la diaspora sont mieux que rien, mais elles manquent souvent l'effet durable qui conduirait à un changement d'attitude et une prise de conscience afin de se démarquer du statut d'assisté.

Comme tout Africain vivant en Occident, j'ai repensé une forme de contribution au développement économique. Mon projet prend forme petit à petit et l'essence serait d'avoir une approche plus valorisante en assistant des projets économiques à prendre forme par une assistance en initiation de projet, à la gestion d'une entreprise. Le tout serait de contourner la fatalité qui fait croire que seuls des projets dirigés par des Occidentaux ont une chance

de réussite. La majorité des Africaines de la diaspora réussit des carrières fabuleuses en Occident. L'on pourrait se demander pourquoi ce même talent utilisé pour l'Afrique ne donnerait pas un bien plus grand impact. C'est une question de conviction et d'encadrement. Un seul projet réussi ferait tache d'huile et démontrerait que la réussite peut aussi être africaine.

Après 15 ans en Belgique, je vais déménager aux Etats-Unis pour rejoindre la maison mère. Je me trouverai le temps pour finaliser ce projet de cette institution de la diaspora. Peut-être les Etats-Unis seront-ils plus stimulants ? J'ai toujours essayé de me prouver et de m'intégrer au mieux que j'ai pu, mais ne sachant plus qui je suis réellement, j'ai fait le choix de redevenir moi-même, avec ma différence que je vois comme un atout. Comme Africaine j'ai la force d'être moi-même parce que je sais ce que j'ai dû traverser pour arriver là où je suis aujourd'hui. Quand on est capable de traverser un si long chemin, ce que nombre d'Africains ont déjà fait, on sait que ce potentiel existe en chaque être humain et donc chez les Africains aussi. Juste une question de temps, de volonté et de croyance en nos capacités. Evitons les croyances fatalistes puisque la nature n'a rien créé qui ne soit appelé à se développer.



“Evitons les croyances fatalistes puisque la nature n'a rien créé qui ne soit appelé à se développer.”

Billy Kalonji a obtenu en 1992 deux diplômes à l’IOB: en Administration Publique et Politique du Développement. Durant les années 90, la majorité des étudiants était originaire du Congo –Kinshasa. Il y avait deux catégories d’étudiants au Collège: ceux qui venaient directement du Congo et ceux qui provenaient d’autres universités ou écoles supérieures de Belgique ou d’ailleurs. Etant donné la situation politique délicate au Congo, ces années-là, une partie importante était restée en Belgique après ses études à l’IOB. L’intégration sur le marché du travail en Belgique étant très difficile, beaucoup d’entre eux se contentèrent d’emplois souvent précaires, de petits boulots n’ayant que très peu de lien avec leurs formations ou des boulots souvent à durée très limitée, dans l’espoir ou l’attente d’une amélioration de la situation au Congo. Mais malheureusement pendant cette attente, plusieurs d’entre eux perdirent leur droit de séjour dans le Royaume de Belgique. C’est ainsi qu’un bon nombre d’entre eux s’est retrouvé en situation irrégulière, autrement dit de “sans papiers”, ce qui va se traduire pour plusieurs d’entre eux par une période d’énormes difficultés. Après la régularisation massive de 2000, beaucoup régularisèrent leur situation ; cependant très peu trouvèrent du travail. L’histoire de Billy présente des similarités avec les parcours décrits ci haut, quand bien même il n’a personnellement jamais été un sans papier.



Billy Kalonji, R. D. du Congo,
Administration Publique et
Politique du Développement,
1989 - 1992

Je suis arrivé en Belgique après le décès de mon père. J’avais 16 ans. Mon frère qui était déjà en Belgique comme étudiant dans la marine marchande m’avait recueilli chez lui pour m’aider à continuer mes études en respectant les plans prévus par mes parents (à savoir, faire les hautes études en Belgique) mais suite au décès de mon père, le projet fut avancé de quelques années. Arrivé en Belgique, j’avais continué et terminé mes études secondaires en Wallonie. Ensuite, j’avais entrepris et achevé des études en Science du Travail et Gestion du personnel à l’Université Libre de Bruxelles. Pendant la durée de mes études et influencé également par l’esprit de liberté de l’institution, j’étais engagé dans beaucoup de manifestations et actions contre les régimes du Congo et d’ailleurs dans le monde où les droits humains étaient bafoués. Ces engagements m’ont conduit à une restriction de visiter mon pays quand j’en avais envie. A la fin de mes études à l’Univer-

sité Libre de Bruxelles, j’ai eu quelques propositions pour aller travailler dans mon pays, mais vu les mesures restrictives dont j’étais frappé, j’avais décidé de postposer mon retour.

Cette décision allait me faire découvrir ma vraie identité dans la mesure où, jusque là, je croyais, compte tenu de mes diplômes obtenus ici et du fait d’avoir grandi ici, être comme tous les autres amis et étudiants belges que je fréquentais. En cherchant du travail ici, j’ai eu plus de difficultés que mes collègues belges avec lesquels j’avais terminé le cursus académique. Je ne trouvais que des emplois précaires. Lors d’une interview à l’embauche, dans une entreprise très connue, j’ai été très choqué d’entendre un des représentants me signifier clairement que c’était difficile d’engager un Africain comme chef du personnel! Qu’il trouvait cela regrettable parce que j’avais satisfait à toutes les exigences mais qu’il

“...au lieu d’investir au Congo, vu les conditions d’existence très difficiles durant cette période, nous avons décidé d’investir pour une meilleure intégration de la diaspora en Belgique et plus particulièrement en Flandre.”

ne pouvait pas m’engager. Ce cas de figure m’avait complètement bouleversé. Ce choc m’a conduit à prendre conscience de ma différence et m’a incité à vouloir enrichir davantage ma formation en y ajoutant les qualifications relatives aux réalités des pays du Sud. C’est pour cette raison que j’ai eu l’idée de m’inscrire à l’IOB où j’ai suivi et terminé le Master en Politique de développement et en Administration Publique. Durant mon Master, j’ai beaucoup appris sur la gestion et le management des projets. Et ceci m’a aidé à m’en sortir dans ce pays.

En tenant compte des difficultés mentionnées plus haut (impossibilité de retourner dans mon pays, difficulté de trouver un boulot suivant mes qualifications, et en sus la difficulté de plus en plus grandissante du mal de vivre des allochtones dans la ville d’Anvers, à cause du nombre sans cesse croissant des extrémistes dans cette ville), mon frère et moi avons décidé d’ouvrir, avec nos fonds propres, un lieu de rencontres pour faciliter une connaissance mutuelle entre allochtones et autochtones, en tenant compte de l’adage qui dit “que quand tu connais quelqu’un tu le trouves autre”. Donc j’ai d’abord créé une association (‘Mwinda Kitoko’) pour faciliter ces rencontres et surtout essayer de transmettre aux autorités de la ville d’Anvers, les demandes des communautés africaines dans les champs socioculturel et politique. Grâce à cette association, nous avons pu faire découvrir les expressions artistiques et créatrices africaines dans tous les domaines à savoir: danse, art culinaire, langues africaines, courts

métrages, films, théâtre, poésie, arts plastiques et visuels, défilés de mode, débats sur différents thèmes. De part et d’autre, l’espace des rencontres et d’échanges, dénommé ‘le Poète’ fut utilisé comme un carrefour de dialogue des cultures. Donc au lieu d’investir au Congo, vu les conditions d’existence très difficiles durant cette période, nous avons décidé d’investir pour une meilleure intégration de la diaspora en Belgique et plus particulièrement en Flandre.

La situation devenait catastrophique à Anvers pour les allochtones; par exemple, nous étions contrôlés à la descente des trains, dans les magasins, et même lors d’un enterrement! Face à cette situation, nous avons essayé avec notre association Mwinda Kitoko de parler au nom des communautés africaines, mais la ville trouvait que nous n’étions pas assez représentatifs. Cette remarque nous a servi de leçon et on a commencé à réunir les diverses composantes de nos communautés pour enfin répondre à cette exigence.

Grâce à RISO (Regionaal Instituut voor Samenlevingsopbouw : Institut Régional pour le Développement de la Société) et à ses deux objectifs, à savoir: amener des gens dans un quartier à vivre ensemble paisiblement et aider les gens qui se sentent exclus de la société à s’intégrer, nous avons pu avancer. Cette institution nous a aidée à devenir une structure porte-parole de nos communautés au niveau de la ville d’Anvers, en nous donnant un soutien structurel.

C'est le café Le Poète qui fut le forum déclencheur de cette dynamique prometteuse. Le Poète fut le premier lieu de rencontres des communautés et surtout d'échanges et de discussions entre les différents groupes. L'on peut considérer que Le Poète a servi de base pour la création de la Plateforme Africaine qui est devenue une fédération des associations africaines de Flandre et de Bruxelles.

Six années se sont écoulées entre les premières tentatives de rassemblement et la mise en place effective de la Plateforme Africaine, en 1999. Au départ la Plateforme était un projet de RISO en 1999 et a fini

Bruxelles. La Plateforme a essayé de représenter la diversité qui existe dans les communautés africaines à savoir les Francophones, les Anglophones et les Lusophones.

Cette diversité a diminué un peu. On a constaté que les Anglophones ont une autre approche de régler les problèmes. Ils sont beaucoup plus pragmatiques. Dans cette communauté, il y a plus des gens orientés vers le business, et d'autres qui veulent travailler immédiatement. Tandis que chez les francophones, souvent des universitaires ont tendance



Quelques membres de la Plateforme avec Wilfried D. de "Samenlevingsopbouw"

par devenir une structure autonome et reconnue par la Communauté Flamande, en 2001, comme étant l'unique porte parole des communautés africaines au niveau Flamand. Tous ces échanges ont permis à RISO de nous connaître et de nous apprécier à notre juste valeur. J'avais commencé comme coordinateur ou facilitateur de ce projet. A sa création effective, je fus élu vice-président et à la reconnaissance par la communauté Flamande, je fus engagé comme 'Opbouwerk' par RISO.

Cette Plateforme a participé à des débats liés à la vie socioculturelle et politique de la diaspora africaine (comme l'enseignement, l'éducation, les loisirs, le travail, le droit de voter des étrangers, le racisme, la politique culturelle, le logement, la propriété, le comportement de la police, les sans-papiers etc.) à Anvers, en Flandre, en Belgique et même au niveau européen. Elle a son siège à Anvers, mais depuis 2004, elle a des branches à Anvers, Gand et

à privilégier la politique du dialogue, les palabres et des politiques à long terme. Aussi beaucoup d'Anglophones n'ont-ils plus cru en l'efficacité de la Plateforme en termes d'un apport de réponses appropriées à leurs préoccupations spécifiques. Estimant que leurs problèmes devraient être traités différemment, ils ont, dès lors, créé leur fédération, une fédération d'anglophones (Federation of Anglophone Africans in Belgium), mais jusqu'à présent beaucoup sont encore membres de la Plateforme Africaine. Plusieurs autres raisons expliquent cela. Pendant la période de la régularisation massive, beaucoup de gens qui venaient à la Plateforme pour recevoir un soutien en vue de l'obtention de leurs papiers et qui de ce fait participaient aux discussions ont baissé les bras après cette régularisation pour des raisons de manque de temps, de travail à horaires décalés ou tout simplement parce que, ayant obtenu leurs papiers, ils n'avaient plus de raison de continuer leur engagement de militant. Ce désengagement

massif de la Plateforme a bien entendu contribué à la diminution de la motivation d'un bon nombre des membres .

Il est difficile d'estimer le nombre exact d'Africains à Anvers, mais actuellement, la majorité est originaire du Congo. Puis on trouve en ordre de grandeur décroissante les Ghanéens, les Nigériens et les Camerounais. La situation générale de tous les Africains ici n'est pas bonne. Concernant les jeunes, il y a un manque flagrant de structures qui les incorporent effectivement. Au niveau de l'enseignement par exemple, très peu s'orientent vers les hautes études. Contrairement à leurs parents, ils sont orientés avec une étonnante facilité vers des formations ou études professionnelles. Il n'y a que depuis deux ans qu'une structure comme le VDAB (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding, qui est un office du travail) a commencé à parler de l'existence des 'universitaires d'origine africaine'. Au niveau de la Ville d'Anvers il n'y a presque pas d'Africains dans des postes visibles. Ce manque de visibilité et de référentiel, rend difficile de motiver les jeunes à croire en l'utilité ou la nécessité d'entreprendre des études supérieures en dépit de leurs potentialités. Ils ont des capacités qui ne sont pas mis en exergue par les différents pouvoirs dans ce pays. Souvent ils sont au minimum trilingues et ils ont beaucoup de talents dans différentes domaines, mais ils ont du mal de trouver même des places pour effectuer leurs stages.

Le racisme (voilà, le mot est lâché) est tout de même très présent, réel, et même justifié par certaines déclarations de certains hommes politiques. Par exemple une phrase énoncée par un ministre, et non des moindres, qui disait que la Flandre n'est pas encore prête pour intégrer complètement les allochtones. Or le vrai ciment, c'est cette présence allochtone qui facilitera la cohésion entre le nord et le sud dans ce pays. La Belgique devra donner une place de choix à cette jeunesse allochtone, ce qui lui permettra d'être présente parmi les grands acteurs de la mondialisation. Je pense qu'il est souhaitable de donner des moyens substantiels aux structures qui

sont issues de la volonté des citoyens pour permettre l'expression démocratique. C'est aussi ça l'exercice de la démocratie. C'est la grande faiblesse de la Plate Forme Africaine, conséquence d'un déficit de la volonté politique. Il faut admettre qu'une structure composée de 106 associations se trouvant en Flandre et Bruxelles, ayant 22 nationalités différentes et travaillant pour résoudre les problèmes dans différents domaines ne possède que l'équivalent de deux temps plein et demi. C'est vraiment trop peu pour pouvoir accomplir efficacement sa mission !

Je souhaiterais pour conclure rappeler à nos jeunes qu'ils doivent devenir des citoyens à part entière de cette société et qu'ils doivent surtout retenir deux choses: continuer à croire en de meilleures perspectives et travailler pour y arriver en ayant à l'esprit la phrase du président Nelson Mandela "Si vous souhaitez un changement, soyez acteur de ce changement." Et aux différents pouvoirs dans ce pays, "Ce que vous faites pour moi sans moi, vous le faites contre moi." de Ghandi. On récolte souvent le résultat de ce qu'on sème. Les responsables politiques doivent prendre leurs responsabilités et offrir des solutions concrètes à tous.

Quant aux formations reçues, ils me sont de toute première utilité. Dans mon travail au niveau de RISO (actuellement devenu: Samenlevingsopbouw) je suis affecté à la réalisation des projets, les différents engagements de la Plateforme Africaine, les différentes collaborations de l'association Mwindi Kitoko et toutes les autres structures dans lesquelles je suis impliqué actuellement. Je retrouve toutes les notions du management, études et évaluations des projets, gestion et administration publique et privée, gestion du personnel etc. Les études effectuées à l'Université Libre de Bruxelles et à l'IOB me sont donc bien utilisées.



“Ce que vous faites pour moi sans moi, vous le faites contre moi.”

Mahatma Ghandi



The Seven Wonders of Dubai: a Legend Soon?

Dubai has been marketing itself heavily around the world in the past few years, especially in the West. The reason: money. With estimated oil reserves for 7 years that contribute roughly 10 % of GDP Dubai is looking for alternatives. Tourism is one of them. The marketing strategies it employs in the West are deliberately chosen to attract not just any tourist but wealthy ones - the type of tourist who will stay at 5-star hotels (not a youth hostel in sight here), dine in fine restaurants, buy luxury goods, and spend foreign currency in the emirate. Investing in tourism is securing future revenue streams and Dubai is gambling that the investment will pay off.



Dubai in the '90s

Undoubtedly you will have heard of the Seven Wonders of the World. The wonders of Dubai, while all man-made (or in the making), are very impressive and (will) attract many visitors. To give an example, the Dubai Government announced a project called Palm Jumeirah several years ago. It was to be a man-made island off the coastline in the shape of a palm tree capable of housing half a million people. Many were sceptical, regarding it as a crazy and highly risky investment. Three years later the project, which has added 78 kms to Dubai's coastline and sold out in three weeks, is nearing completion. Two more Palm Islands are under construction; the second, Jebel Ali, will be twice the size of Palm Jumeirah. The third, Palm Deira, will be the size of Paris and will accommodate over 1 million people. With their boutique hotels and villas these islands will cater for tourists who are looking for something special - and can afford it.

The world's largest amusement park, shopping mall and indoor ski slope (the latter even larger than the famous one already in use now) are also under construction, not to mention the tallest standing structure in the world (Burj Dubai), which is currently 600 metres high but is rumoured to be close to 900 metres high by the time it is completed. It will also include the world's first Armani Hotel.

I could go on for several more pages as this is just a fraction of the projects under construction but I hope the above two paragraphs have provided some insight into where Dubai will be going in the next few years. As to how and where it all started - that is very difficult to document in a few paragraphs so perhaps these two photos, taken from almost the same spot just over 10 years apart, will speak for themselves.

What the second picture does not show is that the buildings continue for another 30 kms.

Getting the ball rolling.

As you can imagine, growth of this magnitude has not occurred overnight. At first there were only a few modest but smart investments. However, combined with brilliant strategies these have created what is now a self-sustaining giant. One example: Dubai's airline, Emirates, started low-key, operating flights to Europe and Asia which used Dubai for their stopover. The government offered special tourist packages to those travelling to the Far East - while on your way to your holiday in Australia or Malaysia you can enjoy a three-day stopover in Dubai at rock

bottom prices and stay in 5-star hotels with pools and beaches not overrun by other tourists. Word of mouth spread quickly and tourists came back to spend their next holiday in Dubai rather than in Asia. Many of the wealthy Arabs in the region who were not very welcome in the West after September 11th also started to opt for Dubai as a holiday destination. With Asia suffering from SARS, many European tourists followed suit. Dubai has never looked back since.

The Dubai Government has been instrumental in developing the City State and the vision of its leaders is a key element of its success. It has been said that Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, runs the city like a private company, jokingly referred to as Dubai Inc., with himself as the CEO. I can speak from personal experience: government services are run very efficiently (far better than many private companies) with a minimum of paperwork. For example, the bills of all utilities can be settled online - and this goes for traffic fines, too!

In a region plagued by violence, conflict and insecurity, the City State is surprisingly safe and free from crime. Sheikh Mohammed himself travels around Dubai without security guards, very often by himself.

Thanks to all this, Dubai has become a magnet for people all over the world. In a recent poll which asked young people from the Middle East region where they would prefer to go, over 80 % said Dubai. 10 years ago the answer would have been London or New York. Dubai has become the Hong Kong of the Middle East and the land of opportunity.

But how has this rapid growth affected Dubai's citizens and residents? The influx of people (90% of the population is foreign) has increased demand for housing and schooling as well as for infrastructure. Roads have become congested, housing has become hard to find and schools are receiving 30 student applications per day. This has led to great inflationary pressure in many areas (housing rent has tripled in the last 5 years) and residents who

have been here for several years are finding it ever less attractive to stay, especially those with families to support.

With the huge boom in the construction industry (some 25 % of the world's cranes are said to be in Dubai) and the short timeframes in which to complete projects the 500,000 construction workers in Dubai have a hard life. Working 6 days a week, 14 hours per day, and with very few rights and no trade unions, they are often taken advantage of by construction companies. With no medical cover-



Tom Segers, Belgium
Globalisation and Development, 2000-2001



Dubai Today

age, extremely poor and overcrowded housing, and salaries of EUR 100 per month they are often considered by many to be latter-day slaves. Recently, however, the government of Dubai has implemented several laws safeguarding their interests to some extent. Trade unions are expected to be legalised in the course of this year.

The question on everybody's mind here is whether Dubai will continue to be a miracle or become a ghost town. At present it is hard to say but with such a determined government an 'I Am Legend' scenario is unlikely.

Tom Segers 



'Visibility' high on the agenda of both the EC and the UN

For more than a decade visibility in the field of development and humanitarian cooperation has been a key issue for both the European Commission (EC) and the United Nations (UN). The EC is currently pressing the UN for greater visibility. But what is meant by 'visibility'? A pioneering study shows that globally two interpretations are possible: project visibility and policy visibility.



Karin Wilms, The Netherlands, Governance and Development, 2006-2007.

Working as Entrepreneurial Skills Advisor with the Regional Department of Community Development in Bolgatanga, Ghana.

Cooperation between the EC and the UN

In the field of development and humanitarian cooperation collaboration between the EC and the UN has grown considerably in recent years, particularly the EC's financial contribution to the UN. In the period 1999-2006 the contribution by the EuropeAid Cooperation Office quadrupled from 234 to 1009 million euros. The contribution from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) to the UN has been more stable, fluctuating between 100 and 200 million euros in the 1999 to 2005 period.

Over this period visibility played an increasing role, starting with the EC-UN Framework Agreement in 1999 which aimed at more efficient cooperation between the two institutions. The Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement (FAFA), which followed in 2003, contains a section on EC visibility that mainly concerns the use of the EU logo in UN publications or on equipment and supplies purchased with EC funds. Meanwhile, in 2000 the European Parliament showed its concern regarding ECHO visibility and in 2001 the EC communication on 'Building an effective partnership with the UN' deplored the lack of visibility of EC contributions in the UN. It was proposed to identify strategic partners and to improve the operational guidelines for cooperation with the UN. In 2005 and 2006 the working group of the FAFA stressed the importance of the visibility of EC financial contributions to the UN and the necessity to improve the situation in this respect. As a result a UN Brussels ad hoc working group on visibility and communication was established. In 2006 the EC and the UN signed a Joint Action Plan on Visibility, agreeing to improve the visibility of co-financed external assistance pro-

grammes. Most recently the 'Communication and Visibility Manual for EU External Actions' was presented in April this year, but at the time of writing these new visibility guidelines were still being negotiated.

It is clear that the EC is pushing for greater visibility. But how is visibility being interpreted, and do the EC and the UN have similar thoughts on the matter?

Interpretations of Visibility

To obtain a better understanding of the concept of visibility it is necessary to look beyond the field of development studies and to incorporate elements of communication science. Key questions in this regard are: who is the sender? What message is sent? Who is receiving it? Which channel is used? These questions were born in mind during several conversations with representatives from the EC and the UN in the context of the present study. Special attention has been paid to one particular case study in which the EC and the UN are jointly working on a project. This field research clearly shows that visibility is a 'hot' topic both within the EC and the UN and in exchanges between the two institutions. A more comprehensive approach to visibility has been developed and generally it can be said that two types of visibility exist: project and policy visibility.

Project visibility concerns communication about the input, the process or the results of a project. Visibility regarding input refers to the contractual elements of the FAFA and is possibly achieved because of the need for accountability and to receive recognition regarding the financial contribution. It is mainly for the benefit of the EU public and informed decision-makers, i.e. those involved in development in the

European Parliament, Council and member states. Visibility regarding the process focuses on the beneficiary population and concerns the implementation of the project. Visibility regarding the direct results of the project is aimed at the beneficiary population, the EU public and the informed decision-makers. These two types of visibility are intended to contribute to aid effectiveness.

Policy visibility concerns two messages, communication about the global output and the impact of development activities and the EC/UN partnership. It is mainly for the benefit of the EU public and the informed decision-makers. A possible rationale for it is to inform these groups about development policy and to generate support for it. It is likely that this type of visibility will also strengthen coordination among donors.

Common ground?

To a certain extent there is common ground with regard to the interpretation of visibility between the two institutions. Firstly because all respondents from the EC and the UN recognise both project and policy visibility and identify similar messages and receivers. Secondly, common ground can be detected when examining the case study. Here both the EC and the UN emphasise the visibility of the process and the results of the project with a view to enhancing aid effectiveness. They also expect an accumulation of visibility, meaning that, for instance, communication with the beneficiaries can contribute to creating awareness within the government at the national level or that successes achieved in a country can contribute to communicating messages at a more global level.

However, there are also clear differences between the EC and the UN to be detected. The EC's push for visibility vis-à-vis the UN mainly concerns its financial contribution. Messages about development results or the EC/UN partnership are mentioned less frequently. In general, the EC primarily emphasises the input of project visibility, whereas the UN prefers to focus on policy visibility. This can be explained by the different roles these institutions have in the development field. The EC has the role of the

donor and provides input, while the UN as the implementer creates output.

Focus on policy visibility

The current changes in aid modalities towards better coordination between donors and more ownership for receiving countries can be at odds with the demand for greater visibility, particularly with regard to communication about the input of project visibility. According to the principles of good humanitarian donorship earmarking should be reduced so as to make it more difficult for donors to 'fly the flag'. In addition, harmonisation and budget support imply less visibility for the donor. Nevertheless, the Joint Action Plan on Visibility states that co-financing programmes need not result in less visibility of EC contributions. As for the objective of greater ownership of the partner country, the question arises as to who owns the project when donors' logos are clearly visible on various items used during the implementation of a project in the field?

In an attempt to avoid this sort of tension and in order to meet the current demand on the donor side for proof that funds are used effectively and that results are achieved, it would appear to be wiser to focus on policy visibility, which offers a number of advantages. It can show accountability vis-à-vis the EU taxpayer; it can present and promote the EC/UN partnership; and it can seek support for development aid among the EU public and informed decision-makers. Policy visibility is also within the remit of a fair number of key players and can thus enhance further harmonisation, which many in the field aspire to. Thanks to the many opportunities it affords, policy visibility will without any doubt be able to foster development and humanitarian activities.

Karin Wilms 



Christian Lünsted, Bolivia,
Development Evaluation and
Management, 2007-2008.

Christian Lünsted, listening to music and looking relaxed while waiting for me to arrive. “Great that we could meet today because I am travelling to Dublin next week”, he smiles when I enter. Not exactly what you would expect from a Master student in the final weeks of his dissertation. Not that he has finished his thesis yet, but for Christian studying goes hand in hand with living. He certainly seems to love life and he is passionate about the rights of others to a proper life.

“Well-being is a human right. And economic well-being is the key word to development. I am an economist, but studying at IOB has made me realise that political and social aspects are just as important - well, almost as important. If there’s nothing to eat you cannot enjoy your rights because you are too weak to stand up for them; if there’s nothing in your stomach, you cannot study. I agree that education is crucial, but look at Bolivia. We have so many poor people with a university degree who are unable to work for their living. We have small farmers risking their lives in the high mountains to make some money so that their children will be able to go to school. And then what? They become one of those millions of poor people living in disillusion and despair.

In this context I proudly voted for our president Evo Morales in the full conviction that he was the right man for the job. After decades of right-wing governments I believed in him. I thought that he would really fight poverty but in fact he is fighting anyone who is against him, abolishing past policies and institutions that we could have put to good use. Privatisation, for example, is not a bad thing if it is managed properly. The former government was too corrupt and privatisation was only beneficial to the elite; this government is not beneficial to anyone. The economic situation is worse than ever before. This is not only because of the global economic crisis, but mainly because Morales lacks a long-term vision. A country cannot live on ideology alone. Anti-imperialistic speeches do not fill people’s stomachs. Throwing out all western investors is not a solution to our poverty. We do not want to become a political island like Cuba. We need the world, and we need to make the most of globalisation.

This is why I decided to write my master’s thesis at IOB on World Bank projects in Latin America. The title of my dissertation is: ‘What works and why in projects financed by the World Bank in Latin America: a systematic review of the evidence’. I chose this topic because I would like to gain experience in carrying out this kind of evaluation for the future, so as to be able to apply successfully for a position in an international organisation such as WB, IADB or CAF. My Master studies in Development Evaluation and Management will be a great help in the further realisation of my dreams. I opted for this programme because I wanted to combine my previous studies in economics and in Law and Economy with my professional experience in the development field. In Bolivia I worked for the Social and Productive Investment Fund and also for the Municipal Council of our capital, La Paz, as an advisor in economic and international affairs. As an intermediary between government and civil society I felt the need to understand more about the way in which they influence both each other and overall development.

I wanted to enrol for a Master’s Degree in Europe because I was interested in understanding how Europe is evolving towards a union of nations. In Latin America we take the EU as an example but we do not realise that it is first and foremost an economic union, which is not grounded in one dominant ideology. We, however, are too preoccupied with political ideologies and tend to forget economic policy, the key aspect. Maybe this is somehow common to many developing countries. I also hear this from my African friends during class discussions. As a matter of fact, I find these class exchanges very enriching. It is a pity that we have only one European in our group but I really enjoy listening to the opinions of my Asian and African classmates. I had never met an African before and now some of them have become lifelong friends. I am looking forward to visiting them – and to doing some more travelling in the future!”



Inggrid knows what it means to belong to a minority, being the only girl among her siblings as well as being part of the Christian Chinese minority in Indonesia and being the only Indonesian at IOB. Her minority position may explain why she is modest and persistent at the same time. She knows what she wants, she is very down-to-earth and she is eager to explore and to learn. Proud of her country she wants to contribute to its development.

“If globalisation is improperly managed it causes disasters such as the 1998 economic crisis in Indonesia. I witnessed the social riots, I felt the racial and religious tensions and until this very day I am subject to discrimination. As members of a minority we are far more than others faced, for example, with having to pay considerable bribes when arranging our official documents and being overlooked for promotion in public institutions. I am proud of being Indonesian but I am ashamed of our government which has implemented many ‘dirty’ policies that negatively affect the welfare of our society. Indonesia is a very rich country. Why are we facing an energy crisis now? How could we have become a top rice importer in the world last year when the country achieved self-sufficiency in rice in 1984 and the UN-FAO congratulated our former president on this achievement? These facts are unbelievable! At the same time I am convinced that we would be able to overcome our problems in a state ruled by the principles of good governance. That is why I am here, namely to learn about the impact of globalisation, not only on the economy but also on many other aspects of society. I am fascinated by the role of the economy in our daily lives. In Indonesia I taught courses such as Microeconomics, Macroeconomics, Economic Development, and Indonesian Economy at a private university.

My Master’s thesis will deal with wage inequality and fragmentation trade in Indonesia. I will explore how these are influenced by policies of trade liberalisation. Fragmentation trade has become an increasingly important phenomenon of globalisation in developing countries, which view it as an opportunity to participate in the network of global

production sharing and to benefit from the technological spillover from developed countries. However, in some cases we also notice a growing gap in wage inequality, especially in the manufacturing industry, in terms of agglomeration and gender. The wage gap can be very different from one region to another within one country. Manufacturing industries in Indonesia are to a large extent concentrated in Java as opposed to regions outside Java. This phenomenon can lead to wage inequality between these two parts of the country, in that workers at the core will gain while those at the periphery will suffer. In addition to this kind of inequality there is also the gender gap in the labour market, as most of the empirical evidence shows that women receive lower wages than men. Although fragmentation trade has grown rapidly over the last decade, its impact on wages is unclear. It can narrow or widen the wage gap, depending on the region, gender, and skills intensity.

To me it is very interesting to compare these findings with those relating to other countries. IOB gives me this opportunity. The exchange of ideas among students is very enriching. I deliberately chose to work with my African fellow students during group assignments in order to learn from them. We share the same problems of corruption, collusion and nepotism and we face the same globalisation challenges. We discuss these issues in class but also when preparing our meals at home. None of us are master cooks but our discussions really spice our dishes. However, personally I am reluctant to participate in these exchanges at the top of my voice. I admire the way that many Africans are capable of expressing their views but I am too shy to do so. I prefer to answer clear questions, rather than hypothesise. That is my only reservation about the new IOB Master’s programme - that it is not always clear what is expected from us. I need to obtain a better understanding of this new pedagogy in order to be able to make the IOB objectives and my own coincide.”



Ingrid, Indonesia, Globalisation and Development, 2007-2008.




Ben D'Exelle, Belgium,
Teaching assistant, 2002-2008

IOB proudly presents the PhD dissertations of two of its assistants: Ben D'Exelle and Eva Palmans

*"Inequality, Networks and Exclusion: Distributive Decision-Making in Small-Scale Societies",
PhD dissertation by Ben D'Exelle*

Ben D'Exelle recently defended his PhD dissertation entitled 'Inequality and Exclusion: Distributive Decision-making in Small-Scale Societies and Networks' at Maastricht University, the Netherlands. His supervisors were Prof. Dr. A.M. Riedl (Maastricht University) and Dr. J. Bastiaansen (IOB). Poverty is often the result of processes of exclusion from economic resources and opportunities. The poor remain poor because they are excluded. This also applies to initiatives of development aid. Aid resources from NGOs or state development agencies often do not reach the poorest sectors in rural communities. If we wish to combat poverty we should therefore understand the causes of these exclusion processes.

Based on survey data, laboratory experiments with students and field experiments with poor peasants in Nicaragua, this work studies the processes that are responsible for the reproduction of economic inequality in small-scale societies. Poorer potential recipients not only have less privileged network positions, they also have less ability to determine who represents them. Consequently, they receive lower shares of the economic resources that are distributed by local representatives. Those who protest against this situation tend to be completely excluded by 'their' representatives. To combat these exclusion processes, policymakers need to improve the social embeddedness of these poorer people in terms of their network positions and/or political representation. As generosity tends to be greater between socially proximate agents; people who have more social relations have a higher likelihood of receiving economic resources from other community members. To the extent that social relations depend on economic variables, it may also be an option for policymakers to stimulate the economic development of these potential recipients. Another avenue of options relates to their representation. We have observed that making them representatives of their community reduces elite capture and exclusion of the poorer strata. Assuming representative duties does, however, require certain skills so that policymakers may need to provide the poor with the necessary support and time to enable them to acquire this capacity." 



Eva Palmans, Belgium, VLIR-scholar, 2002-2008

"Médias et politique en situation de crise: le cas du Burundi", PhD dissertation by Eva Palmans

Eva Palmans is about to defend her PhD dissertation entitled: 'Media and politics in a crisis situation: the case of Burundi' at the University of Antwerp. Her supervisors are Prof. Dr. J. Verschueren (UA) and Prof. Dr. F. Reyntjens (IOB). The dissertation analyses the contribution of local media to the political transitions in Burundi, more specifically during the 1993 and 2005 elections. It approaches the relations between the media and political developments from the point of view of the media. A thorough analysis of the media is crucial to understanding the socio-political phenomena in contemporary Africa. With regard to these processes the media are at the same time privileged witnesses, judges, key players, interpreters; they are also in a sense the collective memory. The media's discourse vis-à-vis the political players is significant not only as regards understanding the relations between the media and the principal players in the electoral process but also as regards understanding the contribution of the media to the process and their impact on journalistic practices. The changes observed refer to the conditions of production within the media and to the larger context such as the professional environment in general and the relations with the political players. The major changes that occurred between 1993 and 2005 are clearly visible at all these levels and have become firmly embedded in the changing political context. 

Curriculum reform evaluation: Only practice makes perfect!

One academic year has passed since the implementation of the curriculum reform at IOB. Hilde Deman and Tom De Herdt have written an evaluation report. Here are some excerpts.

In the last few years IOB has gone through a process of change aimed at updating and improving its internal functioning in order to provide better education, research and policy advice. These changes were triggered by a reflection exercise in which all IOB members were extensively involved through the medium of several brainstorming sessions, discussions within and between theme groups, consultations with students, etc. The process of curriculum reform took place between 2004 and 2007 and during the academic year 2007-2008 IOB started implementing the new programmes. In a way we

regard this first year as a somewhat experimental year in which we try out our new ideas. At the end of this year we will have to consider how to move forward; which changes have proven to be beneficial to the educational system and are worth keeping, and which should perhaps be reviewed.

The organisation of a constant feedback loop with the students provided us with invaluable information throughout the year. We are very grateful to all those IOB students (current ones and alumni) who offered their frank and honest comments, suggestions, ideas, etc. Many of the recommendations that we proposed were brought up during formal and informal discussions with students and lecturers. We would like to thank the 2007-2008 students in particular for being in a way our 'guinea pigs'. They were the first students to participate in our new programmes and educational system and, as with any new beginning, the new approaches sometimes led to uncertainty, confusion, and beginners' mistakes. Even though the situation was at times frustrating for the students, they were always patient and helpful and they understood that they were participating in a wider process that would benefit themselves, future students, and the IOB community at large.

Here is an overview of some of the main results achieved so far:

1 Focus on "better professionals" with three core competencies:

detective skills (data collection, analysis, and interpretation), communication skills (making ideas accessible for heterogeneous groups) and diplomatic skills (negotiation, conflict mediation, achieving agreement).

2 Better definition of the target group, consisting of:

- All categories of development professionals wishing to contribute to the definition, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of development policies and programmes.
- Students from or interested in developing countries where the impact of the international community is high.
- Students with a background in social sciences and with a sufficient knowledge of the research methodologies used in them.

3 Updating of existing programmes, multidisciplinary profile, collective endeavour:

The new Master's Degrees were created on the basis of the three previously existing programmes

which performed satisfactorily but were in need of updating because of their lack of a common focal point. The core of the new Master's programmes is thus still the same, but they have become more of a collective IOB endeavour involving the contribution of all target groups; all programmes aim to have a multidisciplinary and practice-oriented profile. However, in terms of students, we have observed that only the DEM programme has a multidisciplinary audience.

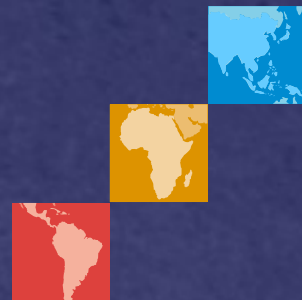
4 Programmes in English only: Since this academic year the MA programmes are offered in English only, no longer alternating between French and English. We planned to organise an intensive preparatory two-month English course for French-speaking students before the start of the programme but due to the low number of French-speaking students who applied the course was not organised this year. Students whose English language skills needed to be improved were given ongoing support over the year (e.g. evening course in academic English, possibility of submitting essays in French, etc.).

5 Change in teaching methods (see also Exchange to Change, March 2008): In the new curriculum MAs are no longer subdivided into a vast range of different courses but into a limited set of extensive modules so as to stimulate coherence, avoid overlaps and allow cooperation between lecturers with different backgrounds. This is perhaps the most important difference between the 'old' and the 'new' curricula as well as being possibly the most far-reaching at the "structural" level.

6 Change in teaching methods: The initial objective was to adopt an approach allowing more extensive student participation on the basis of both the targeted student profile (development professionals with previous experience) and the expected learning outcomes. Students were to be actively involved in a student-centred learning process. This objective was achieved in the second and third modules, but not quite in the first.

Perhaps the most important lesson we have learned this year is that the way in which we learn to live with new structures, forms, formats and procedures is at least as important as the nature of these structures, forms, formats and procedures themselves. Only practice makes perfect!





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