IOB believes in the power of knowledge sharing as a key factor in development. For many years already IOB has supported research projects between different actors, both North-South and South-South. More and more IOB tries to link knowledge sharing with its alumni policy, as is clear from the initiative that is described in this alumni letter, the starting up of an IOB Uganda Alumni Network.

Further on in this alumni newsletter you will find an article on fair trade with a link to an online discussion forum. IOB wants to encourage knowledge sharing between its alumni, and since you live in very different countries, this sharing will mainly be done online. Please do share your opinion with us on our e-forum!

IOB has also rethought the concept of this alumni newsletter, because we want to improve communication with our alumni. We decided shorter but more frequent editions of Exchange to Change which link to e-forums would be a better way of keeping in touch with all of you. From now on there will be three short e-alumni newsletters, ‘E-xchange to Changes’, and one large ‘Exchange to Change’ in September, to be printed and given to the outgoing and incoming students.

We hope that this E-xchange to Change will be an e-xperience for you and that you will share your thoughts and ideas on our e-forum. After all, exchanging knowledge is our main mission!

Eva Vergaelen
How ‘fair’ is Fair Trade Food?

What is fair trade?
Fair trade is a social movement that aims to support the weakest members of the supply chain, the farmers, by enabling better trading conditions, decreasing the role of middlemen, and promoting overall sustainability. Fair trade products are being sold all over Europe and the US and even in Southern countries, using big marketing campaigns. Sushil Mohan contests the tendency to view fair trade as unambiguously beneficial on three counts. Firstly, he maintains that fair trade is overrated. Secondly, he claims that the concept is misunderstood, and thirdly, that it is unethical. We’ll now have a closer look at these three arguments, as well as at the counter-arguments of Lily Deforce.

Is fair trade oversold?
According to Sushil Mohan only 50 percent of the premium paid for fair trade products goes to the producer, because of the high bureaucratic and marketing costs involved. He argues that fair trade is thus in a sense itself becoming a kind of intermediary/middleman, by forcing both producers and retailers to be licensed by Fair Trade and pay its annual fees in order to be labeled as Fair trade. Lily Deforce disagrees and maintains that these fees do not have to be paid per producer, but per cooperation and that some cooperations collect hundreds of producers who share the price between them. This organizes the producers and strengthens their negotiation power, even within the mainstream trading system.

Is fair trade misunderstood?
Sushil Mohan contests the claim that fair trade guarantees a minimum income for the producer. He says that in reality fair trade guarantees the price of the goods sold but not their quantity. This is an important distinction, since it means producers still can’t really plan their production, because there is no guarantee that their produce will be sold, and the minimum price guarantee is thus meaningless. Again Lily Deforce acknowledges this claim, but also reminds us that the guaranteed minimum price paid for products during a crash is still much more than what non-fair trade producers get. So even if the producer doesn’t sell it all, he does get a better price.

Sushil Mohan is also critical of the claim that only fair trade challenges unequal relationships and middlemen. Firstly, he argues, this already happens in mainstream trading through increased communication technology between retailer and producer. Secondly, fair trade itself has become an intermediary/middleman, by forcing both producers and retailers to be licensed by Fair Trade and pay its annual fees in order to be labeled as Fair trade product. Lily Deforce disagrees and maintains that fair trade, unlike normal trade, stimulates producers to organize themselves, thereby enabling them to gain negotiating power.

Is fair trade unethical?
According to Sushil Mohan most fair trade products are produced in the South and processed in the North, so again the processing value added goes to the North, making fair trade unethical because this unequal distribution of benefits merely serves to uphold, rather than challenge, the unfairness of the world trading system. Lily Deforce agrees that for so far most of the processing has been done in the North, but also states that fair trade is working with producers to increase the amount of processing done in the South. She gives the example of cocoa producers in Peru who made a local chocolate factory that exports readymade chocolate all over the world. She also refers to the recent development of South-South trading, as shows the opening of fair trade shops in India.

The ‘Debating Development’ series that was once again organized by the University of Antwerp and the University Foundation for Development cooperation (USOS) included a debate on fair trade, which a large number of IOB students attended. The two speakers were Sushil Mohan, professor at the University of Strathclyde in Glasgow, and Lily Deforce, General Manager at Max Havelaar. A step by step summary of the debate, which reflects their two contrasting perspectives, is provided below.

What do you think?
Both speakers have strong arguments against, or in favour of, fair trade respectively. Exchange to Change is curious to know your opinion as well. Answer our poll or share your thoughts or experience within our fair trade discussion thread on Facebook.
During his experience with M&E in this tsunami-affected area, Erlangga decided to pursue a master’s programme in demography at Mahidol University in Thailand. “I wanted to dedicate my life to M&E and help to apply it to the broader Indonesian development community. After obtaining my master’s, I worked as a team leader for a UNDP’s endline survey, as a monitoring consultant for the World Bank, and then as a social policy monitoring and evaluation specialist for UNICEF. In the beginning it was challenging, because people saw M&E primarily as extra work, and failed to understand the benefits it could bring. However, soon the people he worked with realized the positive impact it could have. After all, M&E is a successful instrument to measure beneficiaries’ needs and to adapt projects where required. It also encourages beneficiary participation, by approaching beneficiaries as agents instead of as victims.”

Erlangga had used M&E in the projects he was involved in throughout his career, but was keen to strengthen his theoretical knowledge and understanding of the philosophy behind M&E. That is when he started to research the possibilities of further education in this field, both online and via his contacts whom he worked with in development. When asked how he now feels about his choice of IOB, he answers, “I am very happy with the IOB M&E programme. It is a practically oriented curriculum within a strong theoretical framework and at the same time it is very multidisciplinary. We learn to look and think beyond our own academic background, something which is very enriching indeed. After all, development problems are multi-faceted, so cannot be solved using only a single disciplinary approach. At IOB we are taught how to deal with complex situations, with real life. IOB itself reflects real life, with its diversity of nationalities, cultures and experiences. We learn so much from each other. It’s a mini UN that prepares us for the world.”

After his studies at IOB, Erlangga would like to go back to his own side of the world, to his wife and little son in Indonesia, and to his former job at UNICEF. “Though my final goal is to work in the field and to help to improve the well-being of the people I work with directly, I feel I have one more step to take in order to prepare myself fully.”

“I wanted to dedicate my life to M&E and help to apply it to the broader Indonesian development community.”

Link Up: Similar interest in M&E? Advice on how to write a PhD application for Erlangga? email: erlanggaagustino@yahoo.com
IOB Ugandan alumni network

IOB has expanded the reach of its alumni policy, and is currently trying out different ways of creating sustainable networks of collaboration and knowledge exchange between its current staff and students and its alumni. An IOB alumni event organized in Kampala last February – and attended by some thirty IOB alumni, PhD students and staff – is a good example of this new style of networking event that IOB is interested in exploring. We provide further details of what exactly it entailed in what follows.

The event itself

After a ‘tour de table’ where everyone introduced themselves, Sara Dewachter, IOB alumni coordinator, presented the ongoing and future IOB projects in Uganda. A direct link was made to the professional interests and experiences of the attendees, and possibilities for collaboration within the IOB projects were highlighted. Indeed, several projects already involve IOB alumni (see box 1). Alumni and staff were given a booklet in which all the contact details, research skills and professional interests of everyone present were listed.

After the overview of IOB activity in Uganda, it was time for IOB’s first sounding board meeting – a focus group in which alumni evaluate to what extent IOB programmes provide them with the knowledge and skills necessary to meaningfully contribute within the development arena. Alumni were then given the opportunity to evaluate their competencies, how IOB had contributed to these, and how IOB could improve its programs to better help its students develop the professional skills expected of employees in the local development field. Following this exercise, participants discussed the possibility of starting up an IOB Ugandan alumni organization.

The IOB Ugandan alumni network

IOB alumni can be found in various influential positions in Ugandan society – in ministries, universities, media, donor organizations and NGOs. Research showed that linking up professionals in various key sectors can contribute significantly to development, as the creation of a network of this kind encourages trust, cooperation and communication between different sectors, and this in turn has a positive impact on development related work. Moreover, a network of this kind offers research opportunities, not only among alumni, but also between alumni and IOB staff. This is highly compatible with IOB’s mission to stimulate both North-South and South-South knowledge exchange.

Links with UGABEL

The idea of an IOB Ugandan alumni network was also welcomed by both the Belgian Embassy and the Belgian Technical Cooperation in Uganda (BTC). Jan De Ceuster, IOB alumni and Education advisor at BTC, invited the IOB Ugandan alumni network to join the bigger Ugandan Alumni Network (UGABEL). This network was inaugurated in 2006 as a platform that brings together Ugandan and Belgian professionals who studied in Belgium (or with a BTC scholarship in Uganda) and Uganda respectively. According to Sara Dewachter, the advantage of linking the IOB Ugandan alumni to UGABEL is that a broader network provides more opportunities for organizing activities and supporting research and training. Having a close-knit IOB Uganda alumni network under the broader umbrella of UGABEL seems to be a promising combination in terms of making the IOB Uganda chapter workable and sustainable. This avenue will thus be explored further in the near future.

Belgian-Ugandan research platforms

On 20 February 2014, two VLR-UOS research platforms were officially launched – one platform on governance, and one on health, environment and food safety (HEFs). Both platforms aim at bringing together Ugandan and Flemish researchers and at stimulating joint research and mutual exchange. In a poster session, the projects from both platforms were presented and researchers were able to meet with each other and discuss future projects. IOB is actively involved in several of the afore-mentioned platform projects (see box 1). This also offers opportunities to other Ugandan alumni. One of the research projects is even an alumni-driven project – Tom Ogwang, from Mbarara University of Science and Technology and IOB professor Filip Reyntjens are the two promoters.

Research joins IOB professor and alumni

The above mentioned project that brings together Filip Reyntjens and Tom Ogwang, will deal with the growing refugee problem in the Great Lakes Region. The project is entitled ‘Finding Durable Solutions for Old Refugee Case-loads in Nakivale Settlement – Mbarara District, Uganda’ and will be a partnership between IOB, Mbarara University of Science and Technology and Uganda Christian University (UCU). Given the rising incidence of refugee displacement, not only are a substantial number of people facing the difficult and traumatic experience of being a refugee or an internally displaced person (IDP), but also many local communities find themselves in a situation where they have become host communities for large numbers of refugees and IDPs, as is the case in Uganda. Irrespective of multiple waves of organized and spontaneous repatriation exercises, not all refugees register to repatriate and a significant number of old case-loads remain in Uganda’s refugee settlements with potential consequences for Uganda’s stability. This research seeks to investigate and understand why durable solutions have eluded old case-loads and attempts to establish what needs to be done to address this problem and promote peace and stability in the region.

Email Rose Mutumba and Sara Dewachter, if you want to join the Uganda alumni or the organizing committee.

Look up the context details of (below) Ugandan alumni in the compendium.
Since IOB’s alumni policy is about strengthening the voice of its alumni, Exchange to Change conducted an interview with one of the alumni who participated in the IOB Ugandan alumni event. Rose Mutumba is project coordinator for the Ugandan Angels Center for children with special needs.

**EtC:** What did you think of the alumni initiative?  
**Rose:** It was a very nice initiative bringing the IOB feeling to Uganda; we were reliving our memories of our studies at IOB and our friendships.

**EtC:** What, in your opinion, is the added value of an IOB alumni chapter in Uganda?  
**Rose:** The added value is the fact that we got to know each other in the Ugandan context and that it encourages us to consult each other on similar academic and analytically, since we are all attached besides our academic training. Exchanging ideas are interesting, since we are all all attached to different organizations and institutions, which puts us in positions that allow us to improve policy making and which enables us to serve our country and people to the best of our knowledge.

**EtC:** How will you go about starting development work.  
**Rose:** As I said before, each one of us has his/her own talents and we will have to discuss the different roles that we will play. I am good at mobilizing and moderating sessions or debates and also at coordinating different activities. We hope that IOB itself will support and advise us, on our activities and on the research that will, hopefully, result from our network.

**EtC:** How does this IOB Uganda chapter fit in with the idea to incorporate it into the broader umbrella of UGABEL? Do you think this move will be welcomed by IOB alumni in Uganda?  
**Rose:** Broader cooperation is certainly interesting. The idea was already welcomed by me and other alumni, in informal talks we had with each other. Informal telephone conservations are still going on amongst ourselves on organizing the second event on how often we should meet.

**EtC:** Do you have any nice memories of, or anecdotes about, the event?  
**Rose:** Well, the event was organized by my photo in the booklet made me feel it very much indeed.

We hope that IOB itself will support and advise us, on our activities and on the research that will, hopefully, result from our network.

**Uganda Research Platforms**

**Governance Platforms**

**Governance and post-conflict reconstruction in Northern Uganda**  
Promoters: Kristof Titeza (IOB) & Tennywa Mbabazi (Mbarara University of Science & Technology)  
Towards more effective and equitable service delivery for local communities: comparing the impact of different accountability mechanisms and analysing the politics of service delivery  
Promoters: Nadia Molenaers (IOB) & Mesharch Katusiimeh (Uganda Christian University)

**Urban governance in Kampala: a research partnership**  
Promoters: Kristof Titeza (IOB) & Mesharch Katusiimeh (Uganda Christian University)

**Finding Durable Solutions for Old Refugee Case-studies in Nakivale Settlement – Mbarara District, Uganda**  
Promoters: Phip Ripunsigned (IOB) & Tom Ojaassum (Mbarara University of Science & Technology)

**In Quest for Effective Service Delivery: Decentralization, District Rehabilitation and Local Governance Challenges for the Next Decade and in Uganda**  
Promoters: Tom De Herdt (IOB) & Pamela Mbabazi (Mbarara University of Science & Technology)

**Platforms on Health, Environment and Food Security (HEFS)**

**Intra-household and gender analysis among rural communities in south western Uganda**  
Promoters: Nathalie Holvoet (IOB) & Viola Nakisa Nyakato (Mbarara University of Science and Technology)
Alumni Applause

Theses

On the 17th December 2013, Juan Carlos Polvorosa IOB alumnus, successfully defended his IOB doctoral thesis “Opportunities and Constraints for small and medium-sized farmers in the context of the booming dairy value chains in Nicaragua; case-study of Matiguás.” — Promotor: J. Bastiaensen (IOB)


Papers
Lara Coetz and Nathalia Francesco (2014)

Monica Patricia Niño Peña (2014)

New website
The University of Antwerp, and by extension also the Institute of Development Policy and Management, have a new website. Visit us!

In Memoriam
Danny Van Den Bulcke (1939-2014)

While in Mumbai, India, where he participated in a conference on emerging technologies and development, Professor Daniel Van Den Bulcke learned the bad news of his illness that, eventually, caused his death on 8 January 2014.

Professor Van Den Bulcke became a full-time faculty member of the Institute of Development Policy and Management in 1985. He was the Institute’s chair from 1990 to 2002. He also lectured at the Faculty of Applied Economics, the Institute of Transport and Maritime Management (ITMMA) and the Antwerp Management School (AMS). Until he became emeritus in 2004, he remained the programme director of the Master of Globalisation and Economic Development at IOB.

After his retirement he remained professionally very active both in teaching and research. He was a renowned academic expert in International Business and highly respected among his peers for his many contributions to the academic development of the field. He was a very active both in teaching and research.

In Loving Memory of the
Daniel Van Den Bulcke
1939-2014

Post-script: writing, reading, E-xchanging

Remember, back in the old times, you less than 10 years ago perhaps, posting a letter? Posting was only the last step in fact, a letter was called to be first. Having been living in Nicaragua for two years, the Cold War was still warm, I also took on a weekly habit of writing letters, to my family and friends, back home, on Sunday late afternoon. These memories came to my mind when reading the draft version of this first E-xchange to change.

My generation (born in the so-called golden nation) is still hesitating between being the last real paper generation or the first e-paper generation with this E-xchange. We’ve definitely moved into the future, at least we hope: all will depend, just as in the case of letter-writing, on how and when this E-xchange will truly suit you you find it a hurry, while selecting and deleting the man/or’s mailbox, all you welcome it in a curious mood, just when you were about to sit down and drink your coffee or tea, and perhaps ready to fire a friendly reaction or actively join the alumni community in whatever other way?

Further, this E-xchange is not only in itself exemplifying exchange, it also reporting on a set of new opportunities for ‘live’ exchange, on the basis of the following exchange, it is also exemplifying exchange, it is also.

Because some of us, an ageing minority, might perhaps lament the spectacular disappearance of the paper letter, but one thing is clear: electronic communication can only play a complementary and sustaining role in relation to face-to-face contacts and ‘real’ flesh and blood encounters making up the social network of humanity.

Grant,
Tom

Opportunities & events

Vacancies @ IOB
IOB is currently looking for the following research assistants in the area of:

• “evaluating governance accountability, effectiveness and impact”
• “International Cooperation and Development”
• “Local Institutions in Development”

2nd -13th of June 2014
Summer school ‘The Politics and Economics of Aid’ IOB co-organizes with 10 other European universities a summer school on the Politics and Economics of aid.

28 July - 22 August 2014
Training Programme Human Rights for Development (HR4Dev)
IOB co-organizes a training programme HR4Dev 2014 maps the possibilities to follow livelihoods options, Application deadline: 01/05/2013.

IOB alumni survey 2014! Once in every four years we ask our alumni to fill in a survey to get updated information for our alumni with regard to personal information, work and how they evaluate their study at IOB. Please fill in the survey. It will only take 15 minutes and will help us a lot.

Looking for someone? IOB has its own IOB alumni community where you can contact other IOB alumni (name, nationality and email address are made public) and update your own contact details! If you do not want your namé/ nationality or email to be available to other IOB alumni, please inform us through iob.alumni@uantwerp.be

Applications for IOB
Master programmes still open for applicants who apply for academic admission only (not VLIR-UOS scholarship) and who need a student visa for Belgium, may apply until 1 April 2014. Applicants who are exempted from applying for a student visa for Belgium may apply until 1 September 2014.

25th & 26th of April 2014
IOB Conference: International Relations, aid and authoritarianism: Rwanda, twenty years on, in comparative perspective, IOB Antwerp, Belgium

Evaluating governance accountability, effectiveness and impact

• “evaluating foreign aid effectiveness and impact”
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20 years after the genocide.
Where are we now?


Rwanda Genocide