This is the first time that I am privileged to write the introduction for ‘Exchange to Change’. It is the consequence of ‘change’. Indeed, after two terms (i.e. 6 years) of performing an excellent job for IOB, our previous chair Tom De Herdt had to be replaced… and the undersigned was elected. ‘Change’… and in particular deeply challenging and ever more rapid ‘change’ is what characterizes our current situation.

After having celebrated the success (?) of the Millennium Development Goals, humankind in general appears never to have experienced before better overall conditions of nutrition, health, (more gender-just) education… and even personal security. Yet, the dominant recipes of economic globalization, accelerated technological innovation and political liberalization, which have co-produced these results are suddenly being radically questioned. Whether it’s growing inequality, awareness of ecological limits and climate change, or (too) rapid disruption of established socio-cultural meanings and practices, increasing fear seems to drive more and more people to flee to the imagined security of a comforting past in order to be protected or even to be re-engineered by a nationalist state under strong authoritarian leadership. Furthermore, in countries with more established democratic traditions, people have started to elect populist leaders like Donald Trump, Rodrigo Duterte, Jair Bolsonaro, Victor Orban, and the like, because they promise to ‘make THEIR COUNTRY great again’, denying the self-evident need of concerted and just global responses to these undeniably global problems.

As one of our 2018 Impact Award Winners, Pedro Inchauste, rightly argued in his presentation on his experience with the political delegation of Bolivia in the United Nations Security Council: ‘Today, we need to defend multilateralism’. A Chinese proverb says: ‘If the winds of change are blowing, some people build walls and others windmills’. The networked IOB community is multilateralism at work, rejects walls of whatever kind and builds windmills: ‘Wherever you go in the world, you will meet someone from IOB.’ As Pedro also indicated in his presentation: ‘Being able to connect with an IOB alumnus in the Ethiopia political delegation in the Security Council is concretely helpful in facilitating multilateral debate across differences.’ And, of course, not only and not primordially within the United Nations Security Council (although it is nice to know that IOB is present at that level), but also within so many more intersections of global policy and action.

May I therefore wish all of you an increasingly interconnected 2019! Enjoy reading this new edition of Exchange to Change.

Johan Bastiaensen
Chair
Who has really made a difference? Which alumnus/a has been able to translate what he/she learned at IOB into genuine added value in 'development'?

This was the question that led the IOB Antwerp alumni seminar. The review committee selected three alumni: Khalil Bitar, Narayan Gyawali and Pedro Inchauste - whose work has had a significant impact on development, to come to Antwerp in order to present their work and receive the award. The presentations were attended by some fifty IOB students, alumni and staff as well as being followed online by another 150 people from all over the world. Afterwards, the reception enabled students, staff and alumni to get to know each other as well as learn about the work of other IOB alumni featured on the posters.

These nine posters showcased the work of Myranda Lutempo, Gersán Vásquez, Yasmin Idris, Wikus Kruger, Yacinta Okwaro, Alellie Sobreviñas, João Antonia dos Santos Lima, Fabio Bezzera and Bruna Rego, Erick Hernández and Stella Muheki.

Khalil Bitar (Palestine) is co-founder of the Palestinian Evaluation Society and currently active as M&E manager at Atlas Relief and Development International.

What passion drove you to study at IOB?
The real passion for me is to initiate new structures, to work with people from different backgrounds and also to fight for social justice regarding the things that matter to us. IOB nourished my passion and made me more aware of the steps involved in achieving these goals.

Pedro Inchauste (Bolivia) is currently working as political coordinator at the Permanent Mission of the Plurinational State of Bolivia to the UN/Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

What passion drove you to study at IOB?
My drive was to work in multilateral areas in solving challenges that not only affect my country but also global conflicts. I had studied International Affairs before, but when I got to learn about IOB programs, I began to learn more about development cooperation and I became very interested in the work done by multilateral organizations in cooperating in development. What struck me about the IOB DEM program was its practical approach and it gave me practical tools which assisted me in my internship in Bolivia, where I was really able to apply what I learnt in terms of Impact Evaluation and Indicators. I can now identify myself as a Political Scientist with knowledge of development.

Watch the seminar online: https://jooq.gl/6vbux1

Narayan Gyawali (Nepal) is currently working as the programme director of Lutheran World Relief Nepal.

Who has really made a difference? Which alumnus/a has been able to translate what he/she learned at IOB into genuine added value in 'development'?

What passion drove you to study at IOB?
Before I joined IOB I was working in the Monitoring and Evaluation field, though I did not have any theoretical background at the time. My colleagues from the Netherlands encouraged me to apply and I was fortunate enough to get a scholarship opportunity at IOB. This course was very helpful to me because I gained skills in qualitative and quantitative evaluation, microfinance, gender, project design and micro economics. I also studied more about my country than I previously knew before I came to Belgium.

When I went back to Nepal, I was able to translate the knowledge I learnt at IOB to my community, to my country and to other countries as well as to the Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor.

Do you have advice to young development practitioners and what the future might hold for them?
This is a very competitive world and you should have the knowledge and the theory and be able to demonstrate it in the field as well. Try to be very practical in terms of case studies and translate them into action by considering how these cases relate to your country. Strive to engage with your professors and peer agencies and this will give you confidence when you go back to your country. It is also important to take advantage of extra Monitoring and Evaluation international training courses through organizations like the World Bank, which will give you more experience on the ground.

Alumni impact seminar

21 December marked the 5th edition of the IOB Impact Award, which was held in the University of Antwerp Promotion room. All three winners, Khalil Bitar, Narayan Gyawali and Pedro Inchauste (from left to right) got an opportunity to present their work to the IOB staff, students and alumni.

What passion drove you to study at IOB?
For me, the IOB DEM program was its practical approach and it gave me practical tools which assisted me in my internship in Bolivia, where I was really able to apply what I learnt in terms of Impact Evaluation and Indicators. I can now identify myself as a Political Scientist with knowledge of development.

Do you have advice to young development practitioners and what the future might hold for them?
Multilateralism based on cooperation between states through the European Union or African Union is useful in today's global village in confronting challenges such as climate change, migration or terrorism. Each person from IOB should aim to contribute, wherever they are, in practicing development either in academia or in development organizations, to encourage the spirit of cooperation in order to help solve these challenges.
Maximizing Finance for Development: looking beyond the good intentions

Maximizing Finance for Development (MFD) is the World Bank Group’s approach to systematically leveraging all sources of finance, expertise and solutions in order to support developing countries’ sustainable growth. In theory, by improving the enabling environment, developing regulatory conditions, building capacity, putting in place standards, financing a first mover or innovator, and reducing risks, the MFD initiative aims to boost countries’ structural transformation in order to reduce poverty and inequality. However, in a letter published on Critical Macro Finance (October 10th, 2018) and in the Financial Times (October 29th, 2018), more than 100 scholars recently expressed concerns about MFD promoting shadow banking in the Global South. The E2C team has asked Dennis Essers and Kelbesa Megersa, two development finance experts, to share their thoughts with us on this issue.

In the most layman terms, what is shadow banking?

DE: A broad definition of shadow banking would be financial intermediation involving activities and/or entities outside of the regular (depository) banking system. Although the practice of shadow banking is arguably much older, the origins of the term itself can be traced back to the 2007-2008 US subprime mortgage crisis, which was fueled by securitizations (in simple terms: pooling various financial claims, recombining them, and reselling parts to different third parties) through unregulated, unsupervised off-balance sheet vehicles often literally operating ‘in the shadows’ of commercial banks. Hence, shadow banking typically has a pejorative connotation. ‘Non-bank financial intermediation’ and ‘market-based finance’ are alternative, more neutral terms that basically convey the same idea.

KM: The term ‘shadow banking’ refers to financial activities that look like normal bank undertakings but are not part of the traditional banking sector. Institutions engaged in shadow banking, also referred to as non-bank financial intermediaries, deliver services (e.g. lending) that are normally provided by traditional banks. Yet, due to their unusual setup, these transactions escape normal banking regulations. Shadow banking involves bond funds, money market funds and a diverse set of other financial entities (i.e. hedge funds, private equities, securities brokers, credit insurers, etc.).

In theory, how might the MFD initiative be promoting shadow banking in developing countries and what could its consequences be?

KM: The potential gain from the MFD initiative is obvious but the risks of it could be high as well. A growing list of scholars think that the World Bank has not adequately factored in risks. The main fear is that the initiative opens the door to unregulated actors in the ‘shadow banking’ sector. The MFD initiative (like similar financing instruments of other multilateral banks) ends up resorting to complex securitization schemes to make the plan work. For instance, the World Bank would bundle different loans for different infrastructure projects as an asset class. These ‘infrastructure asset classes’ would become tranches that would then be sold to private investors. The complexity of such assets could increase as the World Bank may bundle not only its own loans but also the portfolios of other multilateral development banks. Furthermore, different types of tranches (with varying level of risks) could be sold to different institutional investors, of whom some favor high risk (high return) asset classes and others low risk (low return) assets. Then, the bank resorts to credit protection (usually provided by big hedge funds) on the tranche. The complexity of these financial instruments and introduction of shadow bank leveraging generate interconnectedness and systemic risks. Given that the sector is difficult to manage even by regulators in advanced economies (exhibit - global financial crisis), developing countries understandably worry about risks.

DE: MFD leveraging mechanisms may indeed significantly increase the pool of funds available for development projects; but similar to what we have seen during the subprime mortgage crisis, securitization might lead to an aggressive promotion of loan origination, irrespective of whether there is a real need for the projects they finance and ignoring affordability and socio-environmental standards. Furthermore, developing country governments would be asked to use their own budgetary resources or the official development aid they receive to (partially) guarantee or subsidize the infrastructure loans, in order to reduce the risk for private investors. Diversification benefits would therefore typically only emerge on the investor/buy side, while the

In practice, what can private investors do to ensure that the MFD initiative is not promoting shadow banking?

DE: To avoid increasing shadow banking, private investors need to carefully assess the potential risks and look for opportunities that are systematically managed. One way is to invest in projects that are clearly stated for a specific purpose, with a clear timeline, project manager, and safeguarding mechanisms. Investors should also consider the social and environmental impact of their investments. They should also seek to ensure that the projects are developed in a manner that is environmentally sustainable and socially responsible. In addition, investors should consider investing in projects that are backed by reputable developers with a proven track record of delivering successful projects. Investors should also consider investing in projects that are managed by reputable project managers with a proven track record of delivering successful projects. Investors should also consider investing in projects that are managed by reputable project managers with a proven track record of delivering successful projects. Investors should also consider investing in projects that are managed by reputable project managers with a proven track record of delivering successful projects. Investors should also consider investing in projects that are managed by reputable project managers with a proven track record of delivering successful projects.

KM: The investment community should be aware of the risks associated with MFD and take steps to mitigate them. For example, investors could demand transparency and disclosure from project developers, ensuring that all risks associated with the projects are fully understood. They could also demand independent evaluations and audits of the projects, to ensure that they are in line with sustainability and socially responsible standards. Moreover, investors could also consider investing in socially oriented projects that have a clear social impact and are not just focused on profit. In addition, investors could also consider investing in projects that are backed by reputable financiers with a proven track record of delivering successful projects. Investors should also consider investing in projects that are managed by reputable project managers with a proven track record of delivering successful projects. Investors should also consider investing in projects that are managed by reputable project managers with a proven track record of delivering successful projects. Investors should also consider investing in projects that are managed by reputable project managers with a proven track record of delivering successful projects.

Private finance is the largest resource to help fill this gap.

Dennis Essers and Kelbesa Megersa, two development finance experts, to share their thoughts with us on this issue.

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Interview

At a global level, how can the MFD initiative be re-engineered to mitigate the risks related to shadow banking?

DE: The Critical Macro Finance and Financial Times letters offer some pointers as to how the World Bank’s recipe for bringing liquidity to local securities markets requires the promotion of the same ‘shadowy markets’ for repurchase agreements (repos) and derivative instruments that brought down Lehman Brothers and much of the global financial system in 2008. Furthermore, it is argued that financial market integration connects the fate of developing countries to the so-called global financial cycle (driven by advanced economy monetary policy and global risk appetite), over which they have little control.

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KM: The Achilles heel for developing countries is often the lack of capacity for concrete ‘own’ development policies, effective implementation of strategies, and coordination of different external actors. If poor countries struggled with the management of traditional development financing instruments, one can understand the challenges they will face while working with new and complex financial instruments. Given its potential, poor countries cannot afford to disregard MFD.

DE: I could not agree more with KM in saying that organizations such as the World Bank and IMF should continue to help developing countries develop the necessary capacities accompanying domestic capital market development, duly taking into account countries’ different starting positions and domestic strategies of financial development. Moreover, the IMF, World Bank and regional development banks should strive to strengthen the global financial safety net to support countries when they are hit by negative financial shocks, including by improving fast-moving, low-conditionality emergency financing arrangements.

AP: Apart from this, what basic measures can a receiving country undertake to prevent the potential negative effects of MFD development loans?

KM: The Critical Macro Finance and Financial Times letters offer some pointers as to how the World Bank’s recipe for bringing liquidity to local securities markets requires the promotion of the same ‘shadowy markets’ for repos and derivative instruments that brought down Lehman Brothers and much of the global financial system in 2008. Furthermore, it is argued that financial market integration connects the fate of developing countries to the so-called global financial cycle (driven by advanced economy monetary policy and global risk appetite), over which they have little control.

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DE: The role of domestic capital markets in developing countries, I am a bit more sanguine than the letters’ signatories, based on my own research on Sub-Saharan Africa. I believe that, over the medium to long term, the development of local currency bond markets is a necessary condition to reduce developing countries’ overdependence on foreign currency debt (which exposes them to large exchange rate risks). However, the deepening of domestic capital markets should be done in a gradual manner and should be matched by the building up of regulatory and supervisory capacity. I think most developing country authorities understand this. To my knowledge, they have moved quite cautiously on this front, especially compared to some countries’ external commercial borrowing sprees.

Kelbasa Megersa is an IOB alumnus, currently post-doctoral researcher affiliated to the Centre for Research in Economic Development (CRED) of the University of Namur. He completed a joint PhD in Applied Economics from the University of Antwerp and University of Namur in June 2017 on the topic of government finances and financial shocks in developing economies.

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Dennis Essers earned a PhD in Applied Economics at the University of Antwerp in September 2015. His thesis has explored the vulnerability of developing countries to external shocks in the light of the Great Recession. He is currently an Economist at the Economics and Research Department of the National Bank of Belgium, focusing on emerging market economies and various topics within international economics. He also remains affiliated to IOB where he was a research and teaching assistant from 2009 to 2015.
Kick-off Weekend

What better way to start an academic year in a university in the heart of Europe than to get together for a weekend getaway in an amazing and serene location away from the hustle and bustle of the city of Antwerp. This was the feeling attached to the 2018-2019 IOB Kick-off weekend! Students from various cultural backgrounds came together to get to know each other and perhaps bond, in what marked the beginning of their study time in Belgium!

Saturday was a day filled with loads of exciting activities for the students, including teambuilding, flipping around the table, singing, dance battles, not to mention the ‘één tegen allen’, a game where students as a group need to fulfill 50 challenges within the hour. Later that evening, the IOB staff tested everyone’s knowledge on matters IOB and world current affairs and knowledge during the IOB kick-off quiz. The night came to an end with a party which brought out the dancing spirit in everyone with sweet songs from various continents.

The following day, the students were trained in a workshop on Deep Democracy and Everyday Diplomacy, then later enjoyed a guided tour of Brussels in what was a historical experience to be treasured.

Debating Development

It has become a tradition ... Thanks to Debating Development (DD), Tuesdays in November and December are inextricably linked with lively debate around the key global challenges of our time. Climate change, the 2018 DD theme, clearly being no exception as it is arguably the most critical and complex challenge the world is facing and the effects are already being experienced, often more so by the world’s poorest. Over eight sessions, Debating Development explored the link between development and climate change from several different angles: migration, global warming, natural disasters and vulnerable populations, multilevel governance in climate policy, sustainable food systems and energy transitions. The sessions had a large audience of UAntwerp students and even beyond and hosted extremely lively debates on the challenges presented by climate change.

www.uantwerpen.be/debatingdevelopment

Alumni Barometer Training

With the support of the VLIR-UOS funded Global Minds project, IOB has started a four year IOB alumni barometer research project (Promotor: Nathalie Holvoet), to study the impact of our ICP master programmes on the graduates and the organizations where they work, broader societal development, as well as understanding further how IOB can prepare and support its graduates to have an even better impact on development. For this research project, IOB has selected 16 alumni from 5 country teams as co-researchers throughout the entire project, to be involved in all stages of the research (from design, to data collection, analysis and finally presentation of the results).

As a first step in this project, IOB invited all alumni researchers to participate in a two-week training programme. The somewhat unorthodox training programme consisted of a combination of workshops where research methods were learned or refreshed and brainstorming sessions, in which the research team discussed together how to improve the proposed research design and instruments based on the newly learned methods.

It was a very intense but very productive two weeks filled with debate, group work, and collaborative thinking both inside and outside the box … but also a lot of fun and general enthusiasm for our collective research project to start!

Football!!

While in Belgium one of the biggest scandals of corruption and game fixing in the football world (or any sport for that matter) is unravelling, IOB is still a big fan of the sport of the Red Devils! Therefore, the staff challenged the students to another Students versus Staff football game. Key ingredients: as many players as possible (at least one of each gender on the field), fair play and lots of fun! The photos speak for themselves!
Research in the Economic, Political, Institutional and Cultural Drivers of the Illegal Wildlife Trade in Uganda

The current patterns in demand and supply of wildlife products such as ivory have put large parts of Africa's wildlife population at risk. Wildlife-related crime is increasing and continues to take the lives of rhinos, elephants, national park rangers, anti-poaching investigators and other park inhabitants. Yet, there are some signs of hope, such as China's ban on all trade in ivory which came into effect on 1 January 2018 and was warmly received by conservationists worldwide. However, their 'success' will depend on the extent to which other countries' governments, end consumers and local actors involved in the wildlife trade are willing to follow suit. In this article we invite Kristof Titeca (lecturer) and Ivan Ashaba (research assistant and alumnus) to give their views on the drivers and consequences of the poaching and ivory trade based on their research experiences in Uganda. They shed light on the incentives of the various actors involved, particularly the local people as well as criminal organisations.

Ivan, could you give a short summary of your PhD research on illegal wildlife trade?
IA: My PhD research is on the nature of the wildlife trade in Uganda, which I hope to link with the nature of the Ugandan state. It will provide a detailed understanding of wildlife trade and consumption in Uganda. For my first chapter, I have been interviewing a community of bushmeat hunters in a district adjacent to Queen Elizabeth National Park in western Uganda. In this chapter, I adopt the cultural values approach in order to understand bushmeat hunting. Issues I look into here include a belief system in hunting deities, taboos, sacred and totemic species and how they interplay with bushmeat hunting. Ultimately, I attempt to show how these local cultural practices can be used for conservation. My main actors at the moment are hunters – both active and former, although I also interview some leaders, local authorities, elders and locals in communities surrounding the park. I have also held interviews with Uganda Wildlife Authority officials, police/investigative officers, conservation NGOs, journalists etc.

Kristof, you are also doing fieldwork among illegal wildlife traders. How did you go about this research and what are your main findings?
KT: I have been fortunate enough to be able to focus on particular areas and processes for extended periods of time, and have had – and continue to have – relative freedom in doing so. In this way, research subjects have crossed my path and 'presented' themselves to me. This was also the case for illegal wildlife traders: for my PhD, I have been conducting field research among illegal cross-border traders on the Uganda-DRC-South Sudan border since 2009 (a subject which also presented itself through 'luck'). I kept engaging with these traders over the years, as a result of which a relationship of trust was established – which is crucial for research into this kind of illegal activity. In doing so, I also noticed they were gradually becoming involved in the ivory trade from around 2009-2010 onwards. When I decided to conduct research specifically on this issue, I was able to follow-up on them, and this issue in general, throughout the years; and they were able to introduce me to other ivory traders – for whom my trustworthy reputation was crucial. My research centred around the ways in which these traders navigated the various structural circumstances they were confronted with: increased confiscations and awareness among security officers and declining supply and low-trust among the traders. I particularly focussed on the power differentials and degrees of 'criminalization' between the traders.

What are people's incentives to engage in or oppose poaching/ivory trade?
IA: For the active hunters, the incentives to engage in hunting are many. Bushmeat is seen as a delicacy and there are many beliefs surrounding it, for example: increasing fertility among women, sweetness/flavour, and beliefs among locals that bushmeat is healthier compared to domestic meat. The other incentive is selling bushmeat commercially. The former hunters (or reformed as they like to call themselves) have given several reasons for quitting. These include old age, fear of death due to various killings of poachers and hunters by park authorities, and sensitization by actors in conservation.

KT: The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora 53 calls Uganda a country of ‘primary concern’ in the illicit ivory trade: it is listed as one of the ten countries worldwide ‘linked to the greatest illegal ivory trade flows since 2012’. It is primarily a transit country: very little ivory originates from the country itself, but instead comes from its neighbouring countries in Central Africa. Central Africa consistently has the highest levels of poaching in Africa and a dramatic decline in the elephant population. Not much ivory, however, leaves Africa from Central Africa; this happens largely through Eastern Africa. Uganda is playing an important transit role in this trade. Concretely,
it reached its peak in 2011, with reductions in the consequent years. Moreover, in 2016, the highest level of seizures took place since commercial trade was banned by CITES in 1989. The main factors in this decrease have been an increasing awareness of the trade, and increased training and actions ‘on the ground’. That being said, poaching and trade often take place in countries in which wildlife is not the highest priority, and where corruption remains a problem – further fuelling this trade. The ban on ivory trade in China in 2018 also seems to have played a role, although the effects of this remain slightly unclear.

Which strategies has Uganda adopted to fight the poaching and ‘illegal’ wildlife trade? IA: The first strategy has been restoring stability and to some extent the rule of law. During the turbulent post- independence regimes, for example under former dictator Idi Amin Dada (1971-79), wildlife in Uganda suffered a great deal. Soldiers killed animals for food and money and this greatly reduced animal populations. When the current government took power in 1986, they realised the potential of wildlife and embarked on protecting animal species. In 1996, the Uganda Wildlife Authority was created out of an act of parliament and this was a step in the right direction. So, stability and relative sanity have helped reduce indiscriminate killings and boost animal populations. The other strategies are to work with partners who are assisting Uganda to fight poaching. For example, some partners are helping Uganda with forensics and DNA analysis laboratories to, for instance, establish whether confiscated ivory is from Uganda’s parks or not and to differentiate bushmeat from domestic meat. Other partners like Uganda Conservation Fund, Wildlife Conservation Society, African Wildlife Foundation and World Wildlife Fund have helped Uganda Wildlife Authority to establish ranger and marine units in poaching hotspots, and with capacity building in the form of equipment and software. Another recognisable strategy is a memorandum of understanding under which Uganda Wildlife Authority together with the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) gave special prosecutorial powers to an NGO – Natural Resources Conservation Network (NRCN) - to carry out private prosecutions of wildlife cases.

How would you assess the success of these strategies? IA: In terms of animal populations, my overall assessment is that the strategies have been relatively successful. Animal populations have been steadily increasing over the past 25 years and this is encouraging. However, there is still work to be done. I have done interviews in bushmeat hunting communities and I can say without fear of contradiction that hunters are still killing animals. I have seen fresh hippo and buffalo meat in villages I will not mention. Partners in Uganda’s wildlife conservation are doing a great job. However, when you look at the low budget the Ugandan government has provided to the tourism sector for the financial year 2018/2019, you really wonder how politicians think. And this has been going on for some years. Given the small budget for the tourism sector, partners have helped Uganda with many technical aspects such as forensics, DNA matching, drones, intelligence, obtaining on-the-scene evidence, obtaining telephone transcripts of traffickers, unblocking telephones of criminals, training of law enforcement in marine operations, building ranger posts etc. In the case of the NGO – NRCN - given special powers to prosecute wildlife cases, looking at their annual statistics of wildlife prosecution for 2016, 2017 and 2018, you can tell that they are doing some incredible work. The main advantages of NRCN include working independently of government bureaucratic inertia, non-selective prosecution and the fact that initially, the DPP was not prioritizing the prosecution of wildlife cases. KT: Assessing the effectiveness of these strategies is difficult. Similarly to debates on other criminal activities (such as drug trade or sex work), there basically are two sides to this debate. On the one hand, one group argues how these activities should be criminalized, and that only severe punishments be able to stop this trade. On the other hand, another group argues how this kind of strategy is counterproductive, and will only push this trade underground. From my own research, based on the ivory traders I have followed over the years, I can only argue that many of them have left the trade because it became too risky – they simply shifted back to other commodities, which they considered less risky. But again: it’s unclear whether the overall ivory trade in Uganda has reduced, it could simply have been taken over by traders which are better connected to high-level security actors.

To what extent do you see the institutional context of Uganda as enabling illegal wildlife trade? IA: The institutional context cannot be ignored in the study of illegal wildlife trade in Uganda. From my preliminary interviews and interactions with various actors in Uganda, I have gained insights into how corruption facilitates the trade in illegal wildlife. There is collusion, concealment and disguise by civil aviation officers, immigration, Uganda Revenue Authority officials, scanner handlers, cargo handling officials, the judiciary, police and even within Uganda Wildlife Authority itself. I have interviewed investigative officers given special powers to handle wildlife cases and they have told me of how ivory is smuggled out of the country disguised as geological stones or pangolin scales disguised as shear butter. This corruption is facilitated at different levels and government officials in security, aviation, immigration and cargo handling definitely play a role. I have also been given examples of army officers, including individuals from the elite special forces and top government officials who have been arrested for dealing illegally in ivory and hippo teeth. Finally, we also have cases where stockpiles of seized ivory have disappeared from Uganda Wildlife Authority custody or stores. The former ED of the authority was once in the spotlight. As you can see, there are many examples I can give. According to you, what is the biggest challenge in fighting the illegal wildlife trade? IA: Institutions which are crucial in the fight against illegal wildlife trade have to do more. For example, we have seen a high court judge rule that 2.9 tonnes of seized ivory be given back to a Congolese trafficker, arguing that the ivory was from a foreign country and just transiting through Uganda. This was in February 2014. Traffickers being protected by top dogs in government is a major setback. Also, we still have cases where poachers are given lenient sentences such as community service or just a few months in jail. A new bill in parliament – Uganda Wildlife Bill 2017 – was drafted to address some of these challenges. The problem is that legislators have delayed passing it and it is gathering dust somewhere in the shelves of parliament. Some other pieces of Uganda’s legislation, for example the Magistrates Court Act 1970 and Uganda Wildlife Act 2000, have lapsed too. Politics also stands in the way of policy making and this is a big challenge. Elected officials, starting with the president and down to members of parliament, have not provided their full support to tackle the poaching problem head-on. So, as long as politicians continue to see poachers, hunters and traffickers as voters, the illegal wildlife trade will continue.

IOB, jointly with ODI (SLRC), CRE-AC, the Royal Museum for Central Africa (MRAC, Tervuren) and the Université de Kinshasa (UNIKIN) organized a two day conference (5-7 November 2018, Kinshasa DRC) on Development Policies and Practices in DRC.

The conference hosted contributions from a variety of methodological and disciplinary backgrounds, as such providing an overview of recent social science research in and on the DRC. Furthermore, the conference was not only attended by academics but also by development practitioners and policy makers, which not only allowed researchers to communicate their results to policy makers but also facilitated interesting debates. During the first two days of the event, the research results from a two-year UK-AID funded SLRC project on ‘Power, Politics and Poverty in the DRC’ were presented. Subsequently, the new editions of ‘Conjonctures congolaises’, ‘Conjonctures de l’Afrique centrale’ and the ‘Monographies des Provinces de la RDC’ were presented in a session hosted by CRE-AC and MRAC.


IOB Master applications are open!

Put up an IOB poster, forward the promotional email, share the Facebook ad ... in other words, spread the news:

The application for the 2019-20 IOB Master programmes are open!! The deadline for applications (for a VLIR-UOS scholarship) is 1 February 2019.

IOB has 36 VLIR-UOS scholarships available for development professionals, from countries on the VLIR-UOS list. Interested candidates from other countries are advised to check out the information about other scholarship possibilities on our website. The application procedure is now entirely online!

More info: www.uantwerpen.be/development-studies

Call for applications for ‘Evaluation Capacity Development’ training 2019 now open!

The second edition of the “Strengthening National Monitoring and Evaluation Capacities: national evaluation societies as a driving force” training will be organized from 14 until 25 October 2019 at IOB, Antwerp.

This two-week evaluation capacity development (ECD) seminar funded by the Belgian Development Cooperation’s Special Evaluation Office (SEO) aims to bring together leading evaluation experts (members of National Evaluation Societies, VOPES) in developing countries to strengthen the ability of those evaluation societies in taking up the role of developing national M&E capacities and use. More specifically, this seminar will enable 25 evaluation experts - who are members or are committed to becoming active members of national evaluation societies - to become driving forces in the strengthening of their own national M&E systems and evaluation societies. Applications are currently open! More info on the ECD website.

More info: www.uantwerpen.be/evaluationsocieties

Tanzanian Alumni IOBrunch

All Tanzanian alumni are invited to participate in the third Tanzanian IOB alumni event.

An IOBrunch will be organized on 3 March 2019 in Dar Es Salaam. The alumni networking brunch starts at 11 am and goes on until 2 pm. During the brunch meeting, IOB will present its latest research project (including the IOB alumni Barometer research) and there will be ample time for networking with alumni, staff and other participants.

in the meantime...

3 March

Save the date! Ethiopian Alumni event

It’s finally happening! For the first time ever IOB is organizing an alumni event in Ethiopia! This alumni event is long overdue especially since Ethiopia is the top IOB country in terms of the number of IOB graduates. So, let’s make this get together an event to remember!

The IOB alumni event will take place in Addis Ababa (exact location tbc) on 5 April from 4 p.m. onwards. Save the date … we hope to see you all there!!

5 April