



Annual Report 2015

Preface

Society for International Development Netherlands (SID-NL) is the Dutch chapter of the international network of Society for International Development. Major changes have taken place over the past few years which also triggered the positioning of the association. 2015 was the first of some years of transition, during which SID-NL has to reorganize itself due to changes in the world of international development cooperation.

Firstly, the transition of the institutional viability after the decision of the NCDO (2014) to end its financial support to SID-NL. SID-NL is grateful for the support it received for so many years from NCDO and the final gesture of NCDO to let SID-NL use the reserves for its future. Thanks to that, SID-NL has been granted a time of transition to figure out its new financial and institutional framework. As a consequence the SID-NL office is scaled down and asks (board) members to take up larger responsibilities in organising debates and managing the association. New collaborations are to be explored in order to provide for the necessary costs. Simultaneously, both short- and long-term cooperation offers great opportunities to enrich the debates by combining knowledge and networks. The transition from a subsidy-based to a member-based model of income generation will likely take a few years, and requires also proper investment in expanding the activities to engage new individual and institutional members.

Secondly, the development discourse is facing the end of its life-cycle in a globalising world where traditional distinctions between North and South, rich and poor have become obsolete. The broadly defined Sustainable Development Goals have made every issue in almost every corner of the world a global and relevant issue: security, economy, environment, climate, human rights, governance in North and South, East and West are all part of a truly global agenda. Society for International Development welcomes this agenda as reflecting the changing world, and defines its role in response to this changing discourse. SID-NL will contribute by looking behind these debates in order to deepen our understanding of the challenges of today and to find answers that go beyond these often superficial debates.

This report shows the activities organised by SID-NL in 2015 to contribute to a world where justice and equality, peace and sustainability are the basic values that will motivate governments, civil society and the private sector.

Programme of SID-NL in 2015

‘New Spaces for International Engagement’

SID/ISS Discussion Series Spring

Core of the programme of SID-NL is the monthly discussion series in cooperation with the International Institute of Social Studies. The discussion series span an academic year, running from September until June. For the academic year 2014-2015 ‘New Spaces for International Engagement’ was the overarching thematic umbrella. With this theme SID-NL reflected the changing reality in international cooperation and the need to redefine the role of international engagement beyond traditional development cooperation.

After four discussion in the fall of 2014, with Ben Ramalingan, Siemon Wieseman, Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Shirin Ebadi and Sir Richard Jullio, we continued the discussion series in January 2015 with the following programme regarding ‘New Spaces for International Engagement’:

‘Emerging Africa, the Middle Class and Development Challenges’

Dr. Carlos Lopes, 12 February

Carlos Lopes, executive secretary of the United Nations Economic commission for Africa, made a plea to take the development and the economic growth in Africa as starting point. Even though the picture of Africa is mixed, the economic growth is real and more than inflated, raw-materials based. Notwithstanding the inequality problem, the middle class in many African countries is growing, due to improved education, urbanisation and poverty reduction.

Carlos Lopez was interviewed by Wim Bossema, Volkskrant, 17 Februari 2015.

“Some time ago, I visited my hometown Canchungo (Guinee-Bissau, Africa), the roads were not upgraded, public buildings were completely neglected, the electricity was out, but I saw more people in cars than ever before, there was no one without a mobile phone, in the evening there was still light, because many residents have their own generators.”

Carlos Lopez

‘Internet, the Last Bastion of Unlimited Freedom?’

Sanja Kelly, 17 March

As the project director of Freedom House, Sanja Kelly analysed what is happening with the internet freedom and pointed to the increasing repression in countries on internet users. Autocratic and repressive regimes see the internet as a powerful treat to their power and want to have a close watch on what is channelled through the internet. National security and the fight against terrorism are often the alibi’s for a much tougher control. All over the

globe citizens are continuing to maintain the freedom of internet use as an important space for civic agency.

Sanja Kelly had a video-interview on Internet Freedom with MeJustice, 30 March 2015.

“Internet Freedom is at an important cross-roads, we are seeing more and more countries passing new laws and unless those laws are positive, we are going to remain with an internet that is extremely restrictive.”

Sanja Kelly

‘Civic Engagement: a Matter of Finding the Right Interlocutor?’

Alan Fowler, 7 April

With his extensive experience in civic driven change in developing countries, Alan Fowler noticed the need for a new approach of the complexity of processes of social change. The multi-stake holder nature of many social problems make it important to find the right interlocutor and the right broker to bring together different parties and to create understanding between different interest groups. These interlocutors need to have specific competences and qualities to fulfil their role. In the network society the question ‘who connects the dots’ is becoming a key question for effective social change.

‘A Financial System That Serves the Real Economy – The Role of Development Banks’

Stephany Griffith-Jones, 28 April

In the aftermath of the financial crisis we discovered how much of the financial institutions are connected to the virtual economy. Stephany Griffith Jones, the Financial Markets programme director of Columbia University, made a plea for financial actors that are focusing on the real economy. Development Banks should be the preferred suppliers for the development of the real economy, shielding development programmes for the impact of collapse and failure in the virtual economy. They should specialise in long term engagement and in financing the small and medium enterprises that are vital for the economy and for job creation.

Prior to the open debate SID-NL organised an expert meeting with a small configuration of professionals from the financial sector, like Rabobank, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands and FMO.

‘From Arab Spring to Sri Lanka Monsoon: New Spaces for Civil Engagement in Politics’

Udan Fernando, 12 May

Sri Lanka, after the bloody end of the civil war with the Tamil Tigers and still recovering from the devastating Tsunami, did not look promising for political change. Udan Fernando, director of the Centre for Poverty Analysis, analysed the unexpected political change that happened at the presidential election in January 2015. Incumbent president Rajapaksa,

ruling with an iron fist after his victory in the civil war, was defeated by his opponent Sirisena. Fernando analysed the role of civil society in this process of political change and the way they were able to create a political platform that is favourable for civic driven change. Civil society was able to make people believe that it was possible to bring about change by the electoral process.

'The West's War Against the World'

Yash Tandon, 2 June

With the new emergent tendency to blend aid and trade and the rising belief that trade is good for development, Yash Tandon, honorary professor at Warwick University and former director of the South Centre, delivered sharp critics on the neo-liberal trade model, questioning whether this will bring about the development we were advocating for in development cooperation. The ongoing stream of trade-agreements (TTIP, EPA's) are continuing the exploitative powers of the West in the world. These are just new forms of economic warfare. Even though he conceded to be an 'angry old man' he challenged the audience to be critical about the real impact of this trade discourse as development.

Yash Tandon had interviews with OneWorld, 3 June, and Vice Versa, and he gave a lecture and interview at De Balie.

"I'm going to bring the predominating belief that trade helps advance the world, down."

Yash Tandon

General survey Discussion Series Spring

At the end of the spring series of 2015, a survey was conducted among SID-NL members. One of the outcomes of this survey was that the Discussion Series are highly valued. In addition, the broad network SID-NL has to offer is important to our members. Obtaining new and practical insights and meeting others are named as the main reasons to attend SID activities. A large number of respondents expressed their intention of visiting the activities more often because they enjoyed the lively debates.

**"I enjoy the sphere of open discussion which is stimulating."
"Good to listen to different views."**

SID NL Members

'Global Advocacy and New Partnerships'

SID/ISS Discussion Series Fall

During the first part of the academic year 2015-2016, SID organised a series of four discussions under the title 'Global Advocacy and New Partnerships'. It was in response to the new Dutch policy for civil society organisations, in which these CSO's are particularly challenged to focus on their advocacy role in the process of bringing about social change.

During this discussion series we changed the format towards a stronger interactive mode. Instead of one, two guest speakers were invited presenting different aspects and analytical angles of an issue. Furthermore we limited the introduction of speakers in order to get more space for interaction with the audience. Debates are getting deeper and richer through this approach and the active participation of the participants builds a stronger connection to the events.

'NGO Advocacy: The New Magic Bullet for Social Justice'

22 September

To Tjoelker (Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and Roberto Bissio (Social Watch) discussed the importance of advocacy for change and the need for international support to social organisations lobbying their government. The increase of pressure of governments on civil society makes this support all the more relevant and necessary. At the same time it is not realistic to expect advocacy to solve the problems of injustice, violation of human rights and lack of sustainability.

'Do Facts Matter? The Hunt for Evidence on Climate Change'

13 October

In political and social change convictions and ideas are important drivers, but what is the role of evidence and facts? Pier Vellinga (Wageningen University) pointed to the enormous amount of evidence that has been brought together in the climate change debate and that it contributed to understanding the problem and convincing people and politicians. Sylvia Borren (Greenpeace) replied that unfortunately, even though facts do matter, power relations matter more. Understanding these power relations is the crucial factor in social and political change.

'Who is Driving the Sustainability Agenda? An Example from the Flower Industry'

10 November

Using the example of the flower industry in East Africa, the conversation between Caleb Lang'at (Fair Trade Africa) and Peter Knorringa (Institute of Social Studies) analysed the role of different actors in the process to make the flower industry more sustainable. Growers, traders, exporters, NGO's, financiers, certification authorities, governments, CSO's; all these

actors play their role in a multi-stakeholder approach. Not all agendas are aligned and opposed interests have to be reconciled.

'Social Media and Clicktivism: How Citizens are Advocating for Change'

15 December

Nighat Dad (Digital Rights Foundation, Pakistan) and Henri Beunders (Erasmus University), by referring to their experiences in different socio cultural and political contexts, underlined that social media do not have a universal impact for social change. Nighat Dad pointed to the protests in Pakistan against a restrictive law on social media and underlined the important contribution of international support for the movement in Pakistan. In the reality of Pakistan, the fight for freedom of expression is critical for citizens. Beunders concluded that social media and their impact for social change is overrated in Western countries. The many ways western citizens can express their views makes social media just one of the instruments.

Nighat Dad had an interview with OneWorld which is published in February 2016.

Survey after each discussion

After each discussion, a survey was conducted amongst the audience. The results showed that our audience is very diverse with SID-NL members, students and academics, non-members from a range of sectors, and NGO representatives. Most respondents find the Discussion Series is a (very) valuable addition to the discussions on international cooperation and development that take place in the Netherlands.

“Networking and opening up minds.”

“It’s a platform for information and discussion. There are not many of these.”

SID NL members



Bread and Brains Lunch Lectures

In cooperation with Humanity House SID organised lunch events. For these events SID-NL invited representatives of the many international organisations that are present in the Hague (Legal Capital of the World). However, after several years of organising these lunch lectures, it became more and more difficult to attract a broad audience. SID-NL had to decide not to continue these lunch lectures until we experience renewed interest in this discussion format.

- **15 January: Ida Haitisma**, executive director of the Hague Security Delta, raised the awareness of the audience about the cyber security threats, that are part of the digital world and the need to develop an international strategy to respond to these threats.
- **19 February: Sylvie Bleker-van Eyk**, director of Deloitte Risk Services, drew the attention of the audience to the humanitarian aspects of corruption, broadening the scope on corruption as a mere juridical and financial issue.
- **19 March: Elisabeth van der Steenhoven**, director of the Dutch lobby-platform Wo=Men, highlighted the role of women in the resistance to ISIS and the role of women rights defenders.
- **22 April: Maria Silvia Gatta**, Head of Politics of the representation of the European Commission in The Hague, analysed the role of Europe in the globalising world and the consequences for European development policies.
- **18 June: Kathleen Ferrier**, former member of the Dutch parliament and now living in Hong Kong, addressed the issue of the rise of China to the status of “superpower” and the consequences for Europe.
- **25 June: Turkish Ambassador H.E. Mr Arslan** explained the Turkish perspective on the Syria crisis and the humanitarian challenges his country is confronted with.

Member events

In 2014 SID-NL started to organise member events. Contrary to the discussions that are open for general public, the member events are spaces where members can exchange ideas and present their research. In 2015 member events were organised on 26 March and on 1 December. In short sessions institutional members of SID-NL open up their experience and insights for fellow-members.

The member events are excellent opportunities for networking by members and also for the board to get feed-back about activities of SID-NL and about new events SID-NL could organise.

SID Café

The first SID Café is piloted on 16 June 2015 as a substitute programme for the Bread and Brains Lunch Lecture. We wanted to organise a low-key discussion with little means where unconventional topics could be discussed in an informal setting. This pilot started with a discussion on *Ubuntu*, a value which is very much incorporated in African societies, but hardly discussed in relation to international cooperation. Both the subject and the format were well received by participants. This offers opportunities to discuss other subjects that do not directly relate to the theme of current discussion series, but is nevertheless worthwhile to discuss and bring under public attention.

SID International

SID International (International Board and Secretariat) has been actively contributing to the preparation of the Sustainable Development Goals. SID was one of the leading actors in the civil society caucus at the Addis Ababa conference 'Financing for Development.' It was a follow-up of the engagement of the SID secretariat as support for Mrs. Betty Maina, member of the board of SID and member of the High Level Panel that prepared the framework for the SDGs.

In November the SID executive committee and chapters met in Frankfurt to discuss the situation of SID International and the relationship between the international board and secretariat and the active chapters.



Organisation of SID-NL

Membership

The core of Society for International Development is the membership. In 2014 SID-NL introduced the possibility of an institutional membership for companies, NGO's, knowledge institutions amongst others. In 2015 we continued our efforts to promote the membership and to strengthen the basis of SID-NL.

	31-12-2014	31-12-2015	+/-
Individual members	104	146	+ 40%
Corporate members	18	20	+ 11%

In August the secretariat organised an internet survey for members to explore new ideas and new initiatives of members and to check the willingness of members to participate actively in the preparation and organisation of SID-NL-activities. Out of that survey a group took the initiative to explore the possibility to develop SID-NL-activities in Amsterdam. Out of the members a financial committee is formed for the overview of the yearly financial report.

SID-NL has a potential direct audience of 2789 persons we reach via e-mail alerts, drawing their attention to the activities of SID-NL.

Annual Assembly

On June 2nd SID-NL organized its annual assembly. More members than ever before were present, showing the commitment of members and underlining the importance of that commitment in the challenges SID is facing.

Secretariat

The financial situation was forcing SID-NL to reduce the secretariat. SID-NL director Afke de Groot left the organisation. Since September 2015 SID-NL has one paid staff member who acts as the office manager of the SID-NL office. The work at the SID-NL secretariat is supported by interns and volunteers. Most of the volunteers are students of the International Institute of Social Studies.

Board

Due to the reduction of the secretariat, the board took the responsibility for the content-wise preparation of the discussions, i.e. defining the thematic issues, finding the right speakers, preparing the debate, whereas the secretariat focuses its efforts on the logistics and the communication, i.e. website, social media, announcements.

Two new members joined the board: Merit Hindriks and Evelien van Egmond.

Since September the composition of the board is:

René Grotenhuis, chairman (2010)

Ruud Nijs, vice-chairman (2011)

Evelien van Egmond, secretary (2015)

Arthur de Groot, treasurer (2014)
Josine Stremmelaar, member (2014)
Kees Biekart, member (2014)
Chimemwe de Gaay Fortmann, member (2014)
Bert ter Steeg, member (2014)
Merit Hindriks, member (2015)

In 2015 the board met 10 times. The main issues on the agenda of the board were the institutional situation of SID-NL (finances, secretariat) and the preparation of the SID|ISS Discussion Series 2015-2016.

Cooperation with ISS

In August 2014 SID-NL moved in into the International Institute of Social Studies. The cooperation proved to be very much energising for SID-NL and the support and the facilities of the ISS are providing a stable pillar for the work of SID-NL, especially in the difficult times of transition. Students of ISS are active and critical participants in the lectures, challenging speakers and discussants. Some of the students are actively supporting and promoting SID-NL as volunteer.