

Tuesday 19 April | Member Special

Interact, Inspire, Innovate

On Tuesday 19 April, SID NL hosted its members and invited guests for the member event 'Interact, Inspire, Innovate'. Scheduled for the event were two discussions and the Innovation Barometer where ideas were exchanged with PhD students. After a cup of coffee and meeting each other in the sunlit Atrium of the ISS, our members attended the debate of their choosing. At the end of the program, discussions continued and connections were made at the drink in the Butterfly bar. We would like to thank all of the participants, speakers and PhD students for contributing to a wonderful afternoon!

To kick off the afternoon, we started with two debates. One focused on Dutch agro-investment in Eastern Africa and the other on illegal deforestation from a criminological point of view. Read the summaries here.

"Flowers for Food? Dutch agro-investments in Eastern Africa and its linkages with land governance, local development and food security"

Dr. Bram van Helvoirt & Gemma Betsema - Utrecht University/LANDac

"Based on earlier research, the study was guided by the hypothesis that while flower production would increase competition for land and water resources, impact local food production, and may constrain subsistence crop production, employment creation as well as technology transfer could offer opportunities for local farmers to specialize in food production for the market or to engage in non-traditional cash cropping".

*Flowers For Food - Scoping study on Dutch flower farms, land governance and local food security in Eastern Africa

Dr. Helvoirt and Bestema joined the SID Member Special to present the findings of the study "Flowers for Food", commissioned by the Food & Business Knowledge Platform (F&BKP) and conducted by LANDac, IDS and Utrecht University. The research question addressed was: "In the context of land governance in Eastern Africa, what are the impacts of Dutch floriculture (flower farming) investments on local food security and how can positive contributions be enhanced?" The study researched the impacts of Dutch floriculture investments on local food security, with a specific focus on issues concerning land governance and access to natural resources in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda and Ethiopia. The research was conducted from a broad development perspective and a diverse range of stakeholders were engaged in the data conduction. This recap will highlight some of the presented findings.

The investments had a positive effect on **employment**, in particular the amount of low-skilled female workers increased. Interestingly, the influx of female migrant workers also increased. The impact on local **food security** was two-sided: the influx of migrants boosted the food market, but also increased the pressure on this market which led to a higher volatility of the availability and prices of products. It should be taken into account that workers of flower farms are entirely **dependent** on the local food markets, since they work the entire day on the flower farm. In regard to this, floriculture investments require the use of **fertile land** which is often already scarce. There is a trade-off: the development of a flower farm decreases the amount of land which can be used for the production of food, thereby decreasing **food security**.

It may be so that **technological spill-overs** might offers a solution in this situation. However, technological spill-overs are rare, since the technology used at the flowers farms does not match the needs of the local farmers.

The most important conclusion from the report is that the dialogue between diverse stakeholders – such as (local) governments, investors and local communities – should be deepened on issues concerning land use, dependency and food security.

"Ecological Exploitation, a criminological perspective on tropical deforestation in the Amazon, Borneo, and the Congo."

Dr. Tim Boekhout van Solinge - Utrecht University

Dr. Boekhout van Solinge started his presentation by emphasizing the fact that we should keep in mind that we are all dependent on our natural environment. He focuses on **illegal deforestation** from a **criminological stand**. In the tropics it is "normal" that the majority of logging is illegal, e.g. in Brazil 60-70% and in Indonesia 80-90% of logging is illegal. Deforestation is an ongoing issue that appears extremely complex to tackle. It comes natural that **corruption** as a direct consequence of the "resource curse" – when a country focuses all its attention on a single industry of non-renewable resources – is a major problem. **The judicial system** is a crucial pitfall. In Indonesia, judges are relatively cheap to buy off and in Brazil, some civil servants would make up to €30 000 a year out of bribes.

The other component of the "resource curse" is an increased chance of the outbreak of **conflict**. Natural resource disputes are the basis of several of the world's major hot spots. The Congo can be put forward as an example of this. Then-secretary Hillary Clinton referred to the ongoing conflict as a "**self-financing war**", thereby referring to the huge profits being made with the illegal export of resources, such as timber.

The **profitability** of deforestation forms in a more general context also a major obstacle to reducing forestry crimes. The value of timber increases 10 times when exported to Europe. Besides, the meat-industry can be held responsible for a large part of the deforestation in the Amazon. In some parts of Brazil the ratio human being to cow increased to 1:3.

Land-grabbing is also facilitated by lingering corruption and the huge profits that can be made from deforestation. Dr. Boekhout van Solinge used the Amazon as an example. The scarcity of land – on paper there is almost 3 times more land than in reality – leads to tensioned relations between forest communities and incoming farmers and can be the basis of land-grabbing conflicts.

The **institutions** should play by the rules in order to decrease forestry crimes, but an efficient approach to stop illegal deforestation is still lacking. Forestry crimes and corruption are being fought, and policies against illegal resource trade are being implemented, but unfortunately Dr. Boekhout van Solinge is still observing that lodgers and farmers manage to stay under the radar on a large scale.

"We have to use the eyes and the ears of the people who live there, because they see it, ultimately there are only a few roads or rivers... We need to work with communities to stop these forest crimes... We need a forest community watch"

The Innovation Barometer

The Innovation Barometer brought us back to the Atrium, to meet PhD students from the Institute of Social Studies. Five students prepared a short introduction to their research, followed by a question or statement on which they asked input from our members. Free to choose, the audience dispersed to the various tables and lively debates were held. A new round started after 15 minutes, so everyone could exchange ideas and thoughts with two PhD students. The research topics covered a wide range of issues: the lingering impact of conflict in a post-conflict society; immigrant integration experiences; democratic transition and its impact on a country's culture; segregation in the context of colonization; and sustainable menstrual management. Disagreements were welcomed, broad-based paradigms were challenged and new insights were obtained. Everyone contributed to an unique experience of exchanging ideas and transferring knowledge!