ON DEVELOPMENT

**Icelandic Road Map
to a Clean Energy Future**

Who Cares About Africa?

**Climate Change
and African Development**

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Icelandic Road Map
to a Clean Energy Future

President of Iceland
Ólafur Ragnar Grímsson

Iceland has succeeded in transforming its economy from coal and oil to clean energy in the lifespan of only one generation. This achievement has attracted considerable interest from all around the world. Rich and poor nations alike are impressed by how Iceland created a clean energy revolution; they seek to learn from our experience and work with our experts.

I strongly believe that if we could do this, so can others. I am also convinced that our experience in harnessing our natural resources in an intelligent way provides important lessons for many developing countries.

When I was growing up in a small fishing village in the western fjords of Iceland, I remember helping my grandmother to bring the coal to her house where it was used to keep our family warm during the long winters. Iceland was then an underdeveloped country, one of the poorest in Europe, under foreign rule and with few of the tools needed to build a successful future.

In the capital, Reykjavík, the coal depot was one of the largest city landmarks. The inhabitants waited eagerly for coal to arrive in huge ships from across the Atlantic Ocean. In pictures taken in Reykjavík at the time, the coal smog taints the skies, a black cloud one of the consistent features of the city.

Now all this has changed. The air is clear and Reykjavík can truly be called the leading clean energy capital of the world. In my youth, over 80% of Iceland's energy was based on imported coal and oil. Now 100% of its electricity production and house-heating needs are met by clean hydroelectric and geothermal production. About 75% of our entire energy consumption is now based on these indigenous, renewable sources.
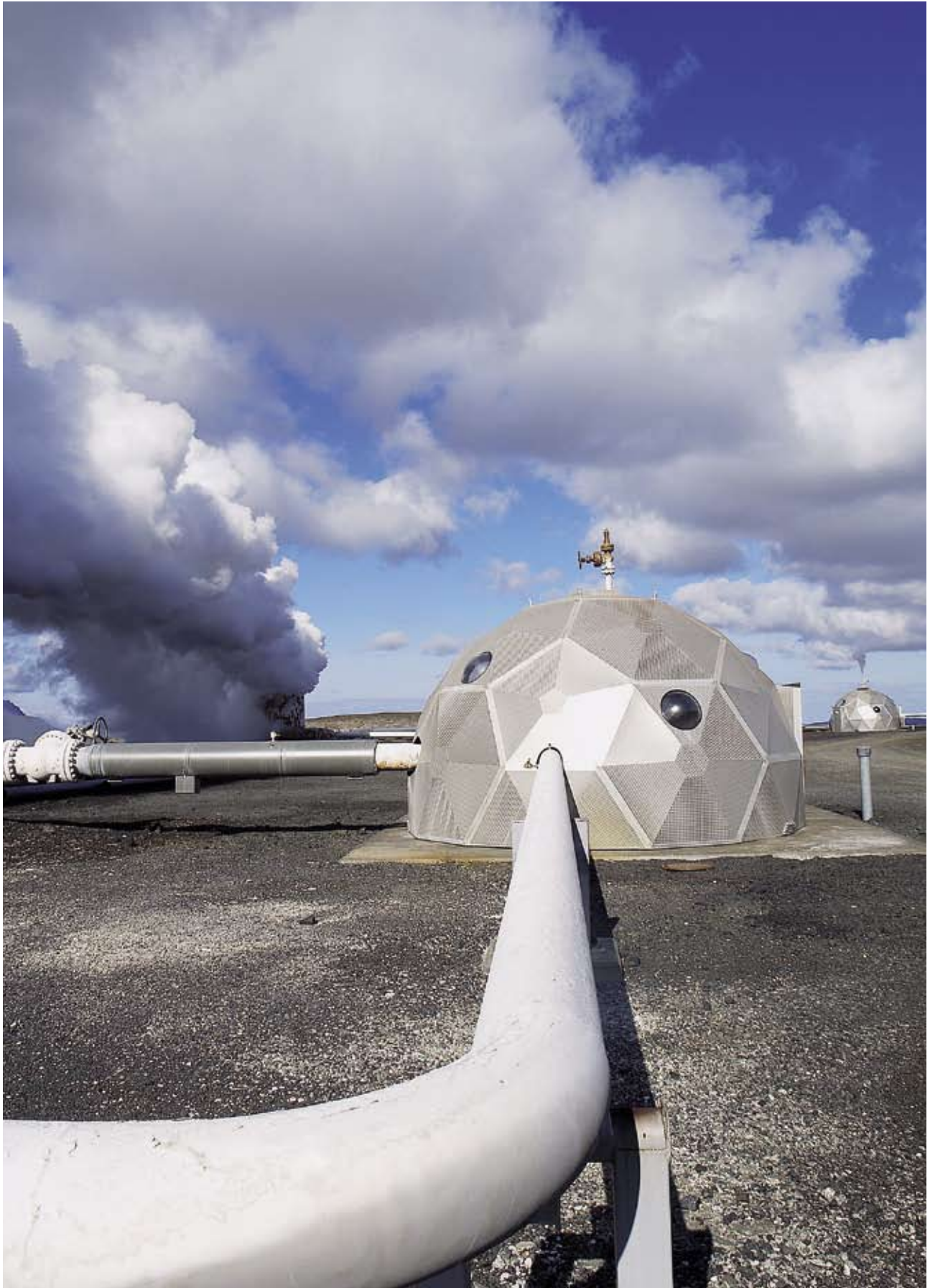
Geothermal resources have been identified in some 90 countries.
Photo from Hellisheiðarvirkjun.

This development has indeed been a success story, making Iceland one of the most affluent countries in the world. The Human Development Index, calculated by the UNDP, put Iceland in top position last year. This same institution classified my country as a developing economy until the 1970s.

The oil crises in the 1970s, fuelled by the Arab-Israeli War and the Iranian Revolution, caused Iceland to change its energy policy. When the price of oil stabilized, Iceland continued developing its clean energy resources when other countries turned back to using fossil fuels. Our sustained effort has contributed significantly to Iceland's prosperity. The economic benefits can be seen when the total payments for hot water used for space heating are compared to the consumer costs of oil in other countries.

The present value of Iceland's total savings made in this way between 1970 and 2000 is estimated to be more than three times the country's national income for the year 2000.

Assuming that geothermal energy used for heating homes in 2003 was equivalent to the heat obtained from the burning of 646,000 tons of oil, the use of geothermal energy reduced the total release of CO_2 in the country by roughly 37%.

In addition to the economic and environmental benefits, the development of geothermal resources has had a desirable impact on social life in Iceland. People have preferred to live in areas where geothermal heat is available, in the capital and rural villages where thermal springs can be exploited for heating dwellings, greenhouses, schools, swimming pools and other sports facilities, tourism and smaller industries. Statistics show improved health of the inhabitants of these regions.

Geothermal resources have been identified in some 90 countries. Icelanders are determined to work with others, in Africa, Asia, the Americas, the Caribbean, the Pacific and Europe, to develop their geothermal potential. I have supported initiatives by Icelandic scientists, experts, energy companies, investors and the leaders of our development cooperation programmes to bring our expertise to places where it is most needed.

The top fifteen countries in electricity production from geothermal sources include ten developing countries. The top fifteen countries in direct use of geothermal energy include five developing and transitional countries.

I have had the pleasure of engaging in discussions with global leaders to advocate a clean energy future. I am pleased to have initiated the cooperation between Iceland and Djibouti where, if everything goes according to plan, Reykjavik Energy will build a large geothermal power plant. For these purposes, I invited the President of Djibouti, Ismail Omar Guelleh, to Iceland to take a personal look at the geothermal power plants. The mere fact that he undertook the journey in the middle of the winter is a firm sign of his commitment and the will of African countries to adopt far-sighted and responsible policies with the reliable support of those who have the knowledge and the financial resources.

I am proud of the many students from developing countries who have studied at the United Nations University Geothermal Training Programme in Iceland. They have been good ambassadors of their countries. I have heard from our experts how well many of these students have fared at home after their studies, where they have contributed in a significant way to their countries' clean energy development.

I have followed with interest the work of the Icelandic International Development Agency and how it has supported clean energy development in Africa and the Americas, promoted cooperation, supported the education of local experts and developed capacity. These operations have enhanced the good reputation that Iceland enjoys all over the world.

I have made it an important part of my Presidency to encourage cooperation with China, India, the Philippines, Indonesia and other countries with geothermal potential, countries urgently in need of clean energy resources to build their future fortune. I have done this because of my strong conviction that for the future of mankind, the equality of states and the good of the environment, all countries need to strive for an energy transformation on the same scale as Iceland has achieved.

It is my hope that many countries will follow our lead and realise that what is now considered a tough challenge can in a relatively short time become a successful reality if the right policies are adopted.

New Organisational Structure for Icelandic International Development Cooperation
Why and what for?

By Sigurbjörg Sigurgeirsdóttir

Introduction

International development cooperation works. The most favourable conditions for such cooperation are well-known within the international community. The international commitments adopted over past years are targeted at creating and maintaining the conditions necessary for development cooperation to deliver the desired results. These international commitments entail, for example, the methodology and approaches in development cooperation derived from knowledge, which is acquired from collective experiences of the international community in executing both multilateral and bilateral development cooperation, and through scientific research on the main determinants of development in the developing countries. Approaches and methods in international development cooperation draw on the level of knowledge at any given time and therefore these change as the knowledge and experience derived from implementing international development cooperation become more advanced. There is a rising demand for evidence-based knowledge in the field of development cooperation in the international community. In these times of globalisation, the importance of mutual responsibility and interconnection of the world's nations is increasingly appreciated, especially if the goal is to achieve permanent results in the battle against problems such as warfare, terrorism, and the spread of disease, not to mention sustainable exploitation of resources and protection of the environment. The international community has come to agree on the importance of combating poverty and inequality, which are the main causes of many of the world's challenges today. This can traced to the renewed and firm willingness of the member states of the United Nations to produce better results in international cooperation aimed at progress of the world's poorest countries. This willingness is expressed in the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations adopted through the Millennium Declaration of

Photo: Gunnar Salvarsson

The international community has come to agree on the importance of combating poverty and inequality.
The photo shows San women with their children in Namibia.

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2000. In short, international development cooperation is successful, given certain conditions, which are shaped by the developing countries themselves, the industrial countries and the institutions of the international community.

International Cooperation – International Commitments

The UN Millennium Declaration, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, the Monterrey Consensus and the Paris Declaration are the international commitments, which have marked a turning point, and these now by and large shape the conditions in which international development cooperation is performed. These commitments have leading influence on the emphasis, methodology and approaches adopted in development cooperation.

The UN Millennium Declaration resulted in rich and poor countries cooperating in the combat against world poverty. The Millennium Development Goals are a set of defined and measurable goals that aim for certain milestones by the year 2015. These goals now form the basis for all international development cooperation. Security Council Resolution 1325, concerning women, peace and security, was adopted in October 2000, based on empirical evidences proving that increased participation of women will lead to added success, since women can both be influential in armed conflicts and are particularly affected by such conflict. With the Monterrey Consensus in 2002, the UN member states agreed that the industrial countries will increase their contributions to development cooperation, work at an open and fair international trade conditions and alleviate the debt load of poor countries. In return, the developing countries commit to work on economical and social reform in their countries and promote better administration where laws and regulations are respected. The Paris Declaration, adopted within the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2005, includes along with increased contributions, clear demands on results, efficiency and systematic harmonisation of development cooperation, both on site in developing countries and within international organisations. There, the parties to the Declaration, that is to say industrial countries, developing countries, international organisations and NGOs, commit to work together towards harmonisation, coordination and success-driven development cooperation. Mutual responsibility and transparent communication of information are a part of this obligating agreement. A good example is peer review, undertaken every four years within the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) by the member states of the committee, where representatives of member states actively participate in such a review of each other. In this way, the member states support development and reform of methodology within international development cooperation in compliance with international commitments.

Approved methods and approaches in development cooperation are therefore based on experience and knowledge acquired directly from implementing development cooperation

and thus become subject of continuous evaluation and revision by the organisations of the international community. In September 2008, a meeting was held in Accra in Ghana. There are certain indications that this meeting will, like the meeting in Paris, which resulted in the adoption of the Paris Declaration, mark a turning point in the elaboration of methods and approaches in international development cooperation. It did not result in a new Paris Declaration, rather taking stock of the Declaration which was carefully assessed and reviewed in order to achieve further improvements to ensure a more efficient and systematic performance of international development cooperation.

International commitments include both the responsibility and obligations of the member states to fulfil their promises with regard to development cooperation. The fulfilment of these promises calls for professional methods and an appropriate organisation of homework by the member states to ensure the best possible efficiency and systematic harmonisation of development cooperation, and thus expected results. This means, amongst other things, that organisational structures and performances at home must take into account the commitments of the international community. Therefore, one has to ensure a sound and well considered decision-making, which draws on knowledge and experience from staff engaged in development cooperation and international comparison, acquired through close international collaboration in the field of development cooperation. International development cooperation requires ever more a higher level of professionalism from development cooperation staff.

Staff in official development cooperation has to be knowledgeable about administration, whether locally, in partner countries or in international organisations. Furthermore, they need to possess expertise in various fields of technological skills. Moreover, development cooperation workers in general have to adopt an attitude built on respect, professional guidance and knowledge of the situation of those at the receiving end of the cooperation. Last but not least, the workers have to have skills to deal with emotionally intrusive and sometimes depressing situations of human life in the partner countries, situations which in many ways are unfamiliar to most inhabitants of the western world.

Increased Contributions and the Policy Direction given by the Minister for Foreign Affairs

With the Monterrey Consensus of 2002, leaders of UN member states agreed to systematically increase contributions to development cooperation, and reiterated the goal set within the UN in 1970 to allocate 0.7% of the gross national income for that purpose. In 2004, the Icelandic government decided to increase its contribution to development cooperation in accordance with the Monterrey Consensus, and now aims to allocate 0.31%
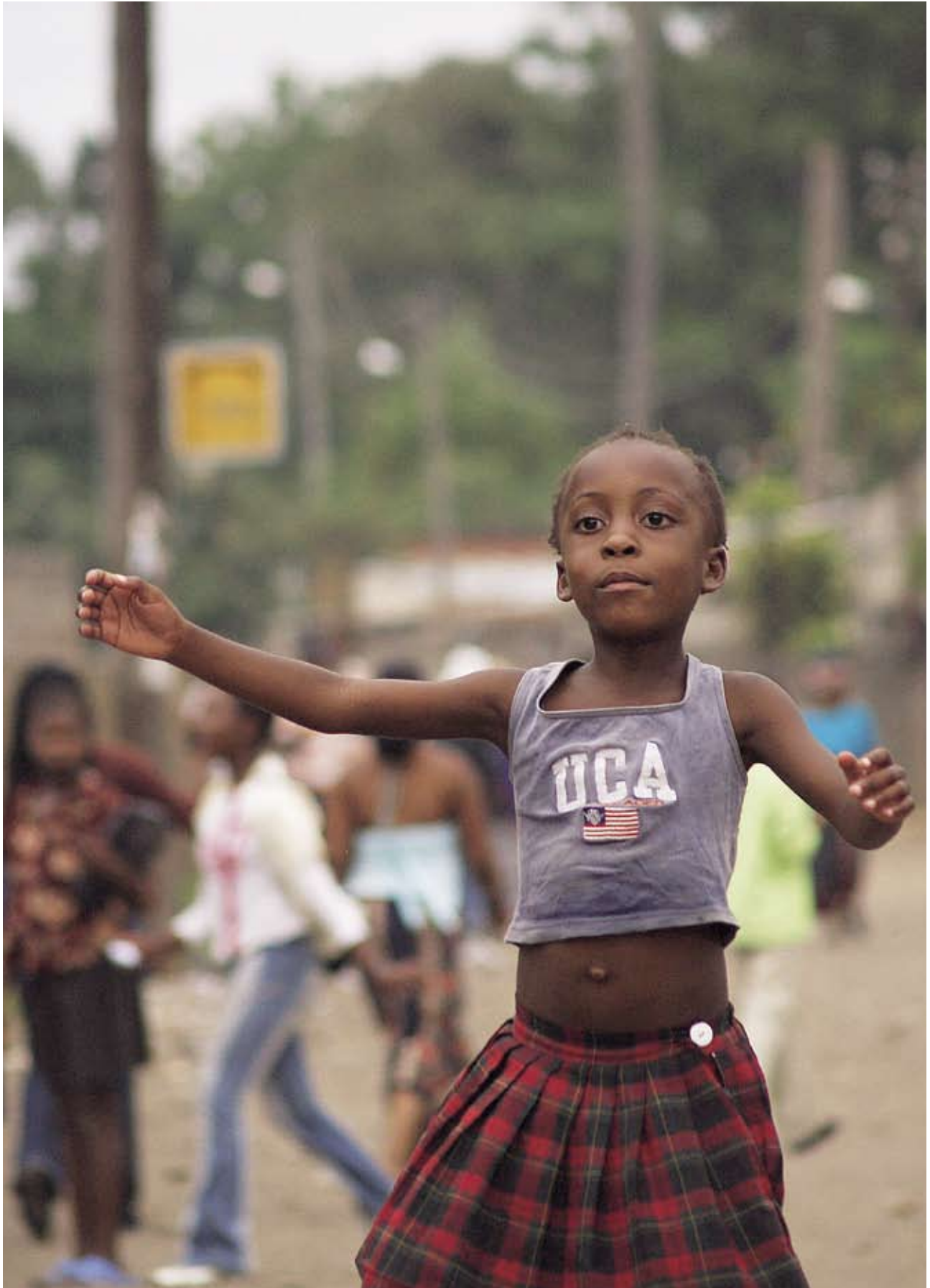
The UN Millennium Declaration resulted in rich and poor countries cooperating in the combat against world poverty.
Photo from Maputo, Mozambique.

this year and 0.35% in 2009. A policy has been stated for Iceland to be amongst those nations that contribute most extensively to international development cooperation, relative to gross national income.

Iceland has adopted the international commitments already mentioned, but has until now, unlike many of its neighbouring countries, hardly participated in the international cooperation that develops approaches and methods in international development cooperation. International development cooperation and active participation within the international community in general does not only focus on what is done and how much, but rather how it is performed. Thus, influence and success depend on how a nation, with a contribution which is small relative to size and magnitude of the challenge being addressed by the world's nations, chooses to define its contribution and share it with the international community.

When a new bill on Iceland's international development cooperation was submitted to the parliament, the Althingi, on 28 February 2008, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir, expressed the following in her speech:

"I am of the opinion that increasing contributions to the Icelandic development cooperation is not appropriate without considering carefully the way the work on development assistance is organised and performed. It must be ensured that Iceland's development assistance is useful to the poorest countries of the world in an efficient way, and that the protocol is in compliance with rules, regulations and declarations of the international community on development assistance which Iceland is a party to."

New Legislation – New Approaches and Methods in Development Cooperation

International development cooperation is performed in two ways, i.e. multilateral and bilateral development cooperation. To clarify this further, it can be said in broad terms that multilateral development cooperation entails contributions made by a state to international institutions or organisations of which it is a member, whereas bilateral development cooperation entails direct collaboration between the donor country and a developing country. No legislation applies to Icelandic multilateral development cooperation. However, an Act on the Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA) was adopted in 1981, which applies to Icelandic bilateral development cooperation. This Act and its interpretation has restricted Icelandic bilateral development cooperation to a single type of approach in development cooperation, i.e. a project approach, which is the method applied for the most part in development cooperation and centres upon distinct projects with defined goals and time-frames. This approach has been criticised for its lack of long-term and comprehensive vision, and for being better suited to the circumstances and goals of the donor countries than those of the developing countries. Furthermore, this approach demands extensive preparation and is therefore both time-consuming and costly.

Other approaches in development cooperation are considered to be better suited to meet the needs and circumstances in the developing countries, for example budget support and sector wide approach. These approaches assume close collaboration both with developing countries and not least other donor countries. Moreover, they are in keeping with the circumstances that are emphasised in international conventions, such as the Paris Declaration, as the basis for development cooperation. With budget support and sector wide approach, it is possible, amongst others things, to achieve a synergistic effect of many of the donor countries through basket funding, as a part of the budget support, and co-financing as a part of the sector wide approach. In these approaches, certain development projects are funded by more than one donor country, thus creating a common fund, which one of the donor countries manages and oversees allocations of the fund and the progress of the development cooperation, while the execution remains the responsibility of locals. In this way, emphasis and goals can be better coordinated, efficient protocol reinforced and strain on the government of the collaboration country, as a result of collaborating with many donor countries at a time, lessened.

All these approaches to development cooperation have both advantages and disadvantages and, therefore, selecting the most appropriate approach needs to be carefully considered in each case, and in most cases more than one approach is in motion simultaneously. It is, however, a challenging task to analyse and evaluate what kind of combination of approaches is best suited in each case, and which donor countries could be appropriate partners. In this way, contributions can be coordinated and an increased synergistic effect attained in the development activities. In choosing an approach, the size of each country's contribution can be of significant importance. However, the importance of the contribution relative to its size depends on the purpose of the cooperation, its goals and, last but not least, how the contribution is defined. To further clarify, take an example of development cooperation where financial contributions to a specific policy area in a partner country is fairly small, but the main contribution entails technical assistance, expert advice, training or administrative capacity building while implementing complex projects in the policy area. The development cooperation is thus based on both a contribution in the form of expert advice as well as direct funding.

With a new legislation on Icelandic international development cooperation, new possibilities will arise to apply different approaches and methods. This is a completely new situation in Icelandic development cooperation, which will create new opportunities. In a methodological respect, Icelandic development cooperation will be brought closer to the countries Iceland usually compares itself to. Therefore, everyone involved in Icelandic development cooperation will take on new opportunities as well as new challenges. Moreover, this will facilitate a

better targeting of Iceland's contribution and bring it more in line with the goals set by the international community and the methods of development cooperation it applies.

Organisation of Development Cooperation and Comprehensive Overview

There is a need for an organised forum within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to meet new challenges within Icelandic development cooperation. The new legislation, new methods and approaches and a changed environment of international development cooperation require a new organisational structure to facilitate the formulation of policy direction and to create a scope for policy-making based on a comprehensive overview of this policy area in order to better set priorities. The organisation of the Ministry has to ensure that the Minister, government and other elected representatives have access to well-established and comprehensive knowledge on the operation and performance of international development cooperation. Obviously, as a publicly funded international development cooperation, political as well as professional objectives need to be considered. Modern-day administration assumes that political views in development cooperation and professional knowledge have an organised and visible platform within the administration, providing political guidance and professional principles of the development cooperation with a common channel for decision-making and performance.

In the implementation of the new legislation on Icelandic international development cooperation, it is expected that a new directorate will be established within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in addition to the two directorates already in operation, i.e. the Directorate for International and Security Affairs and the Directorate for External Trade and Economic Affairs. This new directorate would be the directorate for international development cooperation, where the main task would be the harmonisation of all official Icelandic development cooperation, i.e. both multilateral and bilateral development cooperation. Furthermore, its purpose will be to ensure a comprehensive overview within the ministry on all of Iceland's contributions to the international community, whether in the form of expert advice or financial contributions. This means that harmonisation and organised consultation on the performance of all development cooperation, as well as peace work, will be a part of the new directorate. Bilateral development cooperation and peace work involve staff being directly engaged in field work on site, either in a developing country and/or in or near a conflict zone.

Another common aspect of these policy areas is that in day-to-day management and administration, all preparation of projects and participation of staff members, who have the role of following up Iceland's contribution under unfamiliar and often insecure circumstances, has to be carefully considered and comprehensive. Here a good flow of information is needed between the staff responsible for daily preparation and admin-

istration. All preparation has to be coordinated to minimise overlapping and avoid problems that could potentially have diplomatic consequences for Iceland. Harmonisation of policy delivery in these policy areas within one and the same directorate ensures a more effective internal control and supervision of peace work, as well as the performance of all development cooperation.

The director general of the new directorate for international development cooperation would have, on the one hand, the responsibility, mandated by the Permanent Secretary of State, to coordinate the operation of the directorate, organise and administer the professional policy-making activity within the directorate and, on the other hand, to prepare joint meetings of offices and operational units belonging to the directorate, i.e. the office of development cooperation and the Icelandic Crisis Response Unit (ICRU) within the ministry, as well as ICEIDA. Within this field, a steering group will work under the direction of the Permanent Secretary of State, with the main responsibility of coordinating all of Iceland's contributions to development cooperation, peace work and humanitarian and emergency assistance. The Permanent Secretary of State will be responsible to the Minister for the work of the steering group, and shall ensure normal consultation with other directorates within the ministry as appropriate.

The steering group within the Ministry for Foreign Affairs shall ensure that the Minister, government and elected representatives have access to a comprehensive overview of Iceland's contributions to the international community, as well as formulate policy and submit proposals to the Minister on contributions and the operation of development cooperation. A steering group is a tool to coordinate working methods and decisions, many of which may establish a principle or have policy-making consequences in the long run. A steering group is, furthermore, a tool for the ministry's administration to carry out internal control and supervision of decisions and operation of all development cooperation of the Icelandic government. With the establishment of the steering group, demands on modernised and good governance are being met, encompassing a comprehensive overview and transparency of information with regard to decision-making.

Summary: From Poverty to Prosperity

In her speech delivered when presenting the aforementioned bill on Iceland's international development cooperation, the Minister expressed, amongst other things, the following about Iceland's current status within the international community: "*in the latest UN Human Development report, it is confirmed that Iceland has with remarkable speed, been transformed from a developing country receiving foreign aid far into the twentieth century into a state providing its people with some of the world's best living conditions. The international community has observed this and has expectations for Iceland to*

share its experience and knowledge with other nations and participate in UN projects in a significant way."

In less than a lifetime, Iceland has gone from being a colony to an independent sovereignty, where economical progress and the development of a social infrastructure has been rapid, welfare has become universal, and the utilisation of modern technology, as well as the advancement of education, have – not least considering the small size of the Icelandic population – attracted deserved attention of political scientists and development economists the world over. Furthermore, Iceland's status outside larger confederations and as a state without an army, grants the nation a noticeably unique position, further strengthening its possibilities to form an independent stand on issues in the international community.

A small nation, which has prospered and been successful after becoming independent, boasting incredible economical progress and a successful social development, does have a special message to the international community of today. A small nation that grants its citizens the best available living conditions, and boasts well-educated people, not only has a message to the international community but it has also got the chance and capacity to share its wealth of knowledge. During past years, the number of independent small states has increased. Many of these states have either been a part of a bigger state or a confederation, or recently gained independence after decades under the rule of colonists. Today, many of these states are considered to be developing countries. A small nation that assists another can foster respect and credibility – it can be a role model to other small nations creating invaluable hope. Thus, direct contributions are not always the most important, but rather a government that is ready to use its position and knowledge to spur confidence within a developing country of what is possible, how things can be achieved and what it requires.

A small nation, which has enjoyed a fairly recent political, economic and social development and prosperity, can contribute considerably to the international community. As an independent participant in the community of nations, a small nation has a duty to draw lessons from its progress from poverty to prosperity, and try its utmost to contribute to the joint effort of the world's nations against the biggest challenges of the modern world, poverty and inequality, and ensure that other nations, which still have a long way to go in that process, can enjoy the conditions necessary for that purpose.

The public administration of small nations – although wealthy enough – is tiny compared to the public administration of larger nations, and any kind of specialisation is subject to limitations. Small nations often have to seek solutions, which differ to those of larger nations, in order to have influence and achieve results in the international forum. Thus, they have to focus their priorities and seek all possibilities to systematically achieve the most synergistic effect in the allocation of its contributions. The lack of organised operations and unclear priorities in this respect is

an administrative mistake. A small nation that believes it has got a message to the international community and wants to influence it cannot afford to make such mistakes.

In a tough competition for attention and influence in the international forum, small nations have to use every opportunity to draw attention to the uniqueness of small nations in general, while sharing their affluence and knowledge in an organised way with other nations for the purposes of peace, humanity and progress.

In Iceland, there are some unusual circumstances coming together at this moment in time. The government is committed to increase its contributions to international development cooperation and is, furthermore, approaching the finishing line in its campaign for a seat on the UN Security Council. It has at the same time emerged that Iceland's image internationally is both fragile and weak. A fragile and weak image is not well suited to strengthen the influence of the nation nor to being a role model and a source of strength for other nations. Most should now have realised that leaving the shaping of Iceland's image and reputation abroad entirely to the business community is not a sensible thing to do. In this, the government, on behalf of the nation, must also have a role. The question arises whether there is a way to maximise the synergistic effect of Iceland's contribution to the international community, in order to reach more than one goal? How can a joint effort best reach both the political goals to exercise a more active foreign policy and establish a stronger position of the country in the international community, and the professional goals in the interest of progress, peace and humanitarian affairs. It has sometimes been maintained that political and professional goals do not go together. However, when development cooperation has become one of the cornerstones of foreign policy, the opposite can be argued, showing that political and professional objectives can go hand in hand and deliver successful outcomes.

Climate Change
and African Development

By Nick Mabey

This article draws on a previous paper presented to the "Africa Beyond Aid" conference in June 2007, which was jointly authored by Nick Mabey and Jan Ole Kiso.

Introduction

People in Africa are already experiencing a significant impact on their livelihoods from climate change. This is tragic on three levels. Firstly, Africa's historical contribution to the causes of heightened greenhouse gas levels in the atmosphere is negligible. Climate change is not a threat of Africa's making. Secondly, the solution to the problem is mostly outside of Africa's control. It is in the hands of the developed and large industrialising nations. Lastly, climate change has particularly serious impacts on countries at risk of instability in vulnerable climatic areas. More strenuous climate conditions represent an added cause of instability, and increases already existing stresses. Fragile states do not have the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances as quickly as others and are more likely to become further destabilised. As a continent, Africa possesses by far the largest number of countries at risk of instability which will experience high levels of climate vulnerability.

Greenhouse gas emissions to date already commit the world to at least a 1.5°C rise in temperature by 2050, as even the most aggressive efforts to limit greenhouse gases will only start to slow warming trends from 2040 onwards. In the short and medium term, countries need to invest in adaptation measures to improve their resilience to climate change.

At a broad level, the best defence against climate change is a strong economic base and resilient political institutions. But there is also a need for action to address specific vulnerability to changing conditions such as shifting rainfall patterns. If African states are

Photo: Gunnar Salvarsson

People in Africa are already experiencing a significant impact on their livelihoods from climate change. Photo from Malawi.

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flexible enough economically as well as politically, the climate challenge could even pose some growth opportunities as markets expand for low carbon technologies.

Climate Change Impacts

Climate change impacts can be categorised in four broad themes: Rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns, increases of extreme weather events, and gradually rising sea-levels.

Rising temperatures and changing precipitation patterns will have significant influence on the habitability of many areas – some will become uninhabitable like deserts, and others will become more accommodating, such as the snow-covered lands in Greenland, Canada or Siberia. Extreme weather events will increase risks to humans living in instable areas. Rising sea-levels will obviously also impact habitable spaces – about a third of humanity lives no more than 50 miles from the coast.

The critical measure is an area's vulnerability to climate change. This is a combination of how sensitive the existing climate and ecosystems are to predicted changes. Net impacts will then be determined by the adaptive capacity of the ecosystems and populations affected.

Poor people and poor countries will notice climate changes first. The poor are less likely to be able to adjust and to protect themselves effectively. As such, climate change is likely to aggravate the divide between the poor and the rich. Indeed, President Museveni of Uganda was the first head of state to name climate change as an aggressive act by the rich against the poor. Climate impacts will increase the risk of internal frictions within states as well as generating unprecedented global immigration flows. Estimates range from 200-400 million additional migrants by 2050 – posing a significant political, security, economic and social threat.

What are the likely impacts of climate change on the African continent?

The African continent has already experienced record levels of temperatures over the last decade. It is expected that this will continue. The most recent report by the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change predicts a minimum 2.5°C increase in temperatures in Africa by 2030. Indeed, the UK's Hadley Centre states temperature increases over many areas of Africa will be double the global average increase.

Generally, the rise of temperatures in Africa is predicted to make dry-lands dryer and wetlands wetter. Rising temperatures will shift patterns of human habitability through impacts on crop growth, risk of diseases, desertification and related water scarcity.

Agriculture

The Fourth Report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change stated in 2007 that:

"agricultural production, including access to food, in many African countries and regions is projected to be severely compromised by climate variability and change. The area suitable for agriculture, the length of growing seasons and yield potential, particularly along the margins of semi-arid and arid areas, are expected to decrease. This would further adversely affect food security and exacerbate malnutrition in the continent. In some countries, yields from rain-fed agriculture could be reduced by up to 50% by 2020."

The IPCC predicts that the net impact will see around 600,000 square kilometres of cultivable land becoming unsuitable for agricultural activities. They forecast, for example, that wheat production could all but disappear from the African continent by 2080. Soya bean harvests are expected to drop close to 30% by 2050. Similarly, the Stern Review predicts that crop yields in the whole of Africa will fall as much as 30% by 2050. All this will be due to the twin impact of higher temperatures and less predictable weather patterns. As up to 70% of the African population currently relies on rain-fed agriculture or pastoralism, this predicted impact on agricultural yields in Africa will obviously have major economic and social impacts.

The predictions for the whole of the continent, however, are not uniform. The IPCC, for example, forecasts that some areas in eastern Africa such as the Ethiopian highlands might benefit. This can offset some of the impacts on agricultural production in lower-lying areas. Also, some parts of southern Africa are forecasted to become wetter. However, this might include increases of extreme weather events, which do not necessarily facilitate agricultural production.

Water Scarcity

With temperatures rising, coupled with growing populations, water scarcity will be even more widespread, and water management in the form of storage, transportation and allocation will emerge as a strong growth industry. Here, again, the poor will feel the impact stronger than the more affluent. As a general rule of thumb, the richer are less impacted by the price of water than the poor, and the availability of water is closely linked to almost all the poverty indicators, including education and gender issues.

Coasts and Oceans

Rises in sea-levels are notoriously difficult to predict, but recent data indicates a steady increase of annual rises, and predictions suggest a likely increase of at least half a metre over the course

Generally, the rise of temperatures in Africa is predicted to make dry-lands dryer and wetlands wetter. Photo from Malawi.

Africa´s potential to better use its green energy opportunities is huge and needs to be tapped as a new resource in the quest for sustainable growth.
Upper photo from Malawi and lower from Namibia.

Photo: Gunnar Salvarsson

of this century. Increases in sea level adversely impact salt conditions, sea-defences and water-systems. Obviously, low-lying coastal areas with large populations are the most vulnerable. The Stern Review estimated that the cost of adaptation could amount to at least 5-10% of GDP especially in the delta areas of Egypt or Nigeria.

An early consequence of the combination of sea level rise and temperature increase is that mangroves and coral reefs are projected to become severely degraded. This will have grave consequences for the fishing and tourism industries on which many Africans depend. Already, patterns of commercial fish stocks are changing off the West African coast due to unexpected changes in ocean circulation and nutrient availability.

Human Conflict

Predicting what climate change could entail for the level of human conflict in Africa is difficult to forecast due to the dependence on other human factors, such as internal political resilience or international engagement at the time. However, climate security has been taken for granted over recent centuries. Climate events, when they occurred, were seen to be out of humanity's control. This will surely change.

Likely climatic changes will become a standard part of security analysis. Although the origins of conflict are complex and varied, economic well-being – and with it the management of scarce resources – is a major factor in triggering human conflict. Climate change will affect the demographic and economic balance of whole regions, especially by creating greater scarcity of food and water.

Rising temperatures increase desertification – as has happened in Darfur over the last decades – and this in turn creates greater competition over already scarce resources. Migration out of these affected areas will further spread conflicts regionally beyond state borders and into cities. Urban poverty will increase as people migrate and search for opportunities. The Ivory Coast, Darfur, Nigeria, Senegal and Mauritius are just some areas where we should keep climate conditions on close watch in order to fully understand the political picture.

Some regions of Africa are expected to be more strongly affected than others. The sub-tropical regions of Congo, for example, are currently predicted to experience only minor threats from climate change, while the extreme northern and southern regions of the continent will in general also experience less severe climate variability.

Three Case studies

Ghana and the Sahel region are expected to encounter increasing desertification. Throughout the whole of West Africa the conti-

nent's climate extremes are at their closest proximity. These contrasts will become more accentuated as the savannas and deserts of the Sahel region will move further south towards the coastal areas as rainfall continues its downward trend since the 1950s.

Indeed, when the UN Security Council debated the issue of climate security in April 2007, the Ghanaian representative, L K Christian, pointed out that nomadic Fulani cattle herdsmen were already moving south and beginning to arm themselves – in reaction to local farming communities who where threatening their cattle herds.

Luckily, Ghana is an increasingly resilient country, which can hopefully defuse potential conflict situations via political institutions and economic strength. However, similar events in adjacent weaker countries could become highly destabilising. The risk of an encroaching desert will occupy the whole region for some time to come.

The Rift Valley is generally predicted to experience wetter and more volatile conditions while temperatures continue to rise. The maximum temperature in Kericho, a highland area in the Rift Valley province where most of Kenya's tea exports are grown, has already increased by more than 3°C during the past 20 years. Rainfall in the area is predicted to increase. However, it will be less seasonal and more intense than it is today. Both these factors are likely to make agricultural activities more difficult, as seeding patterns will be less predictable and crops more frequently destroyed by heavy rainfall.

The long-term fate of the snow-capped mountains in the Rift Valley is well documented. But apart from the area losing one of its iconic tourism landmarks, climate change is predicted to have a major impact on river flows and the hydro-electric industry. Drought in the late 1990s already severely impacted this major source of energy supply in the area and has had a significant knock-on effect on GDP growth of Kenya. Irregular rain patterns could make electricity supply patterns more unpredictable in the future.

Additionally, the region is already experiencing changing patterns of disease prevalence. Malaria is moving into areas that were previously too cold for it to spread, such as in the highlands of Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda. Similarly, Rift Valley fever is ravaging livestock in areas where it previously had not been recognised as a problem.

Egypt is positioned in another region of Africa which is very likely to be severely impacted by climate change. Not only is Egypt's population projected to rise from 67.9 million to around 125 million in the year 2050, but 97% percent of the water consumed in Egypt today originates from outside the country.

The Nile's water is being used so extensively to irrigate crop fields that at times the flow into the Mediterranean is reduced to nothing. The IPCC predicts that under current water management practices, the Nile flow will decrease by up to 80% by the end of this century - mostly because it will lose much of its capacity while flowing through much drier areas in both Sudan and Ethiopia. This will have significant knock-on effects on crop yields and human consumption further down the river. Climate change will therefore bring Egypt's strong dependency on Nile river flows to the forefront. The fear is that Nile water will increasingly become a trigger for regional tensions.

As regards the Egyptian Mediterranean coastline, rising sea levels will incrementally threaten the low-lying ground on the banks of the Nile delta. Egypt's delta is one of the most densely populated areas in the world and is extremely vulnerable to sea level rises. Some of Egypt's most fertile land will be flooded by saltwater. One study suggests that even a half a metre rise in sea levels (well within predictions for this century) will cause the migration of some 2 million people. Thus, both the north and the south of Egypt will be placed in precarious positions by climate change events.

An emerging African climate strategy

Overall, the balance of climate change projections – even over the next 50 years – seem to point to a range of increased stresses and negative impacts on Africa. Though there are always uncertainties over the details, we are best advised to begin to take the challenge and impacts of climate change seriously. As the former US Chief of Staff General Sullivan stated in his report on the security considerations of climate change: "If you wait until you have 100% certainty on the battlefield, something bad is going to happen".

So what might be the steps that African countries can take in response? One thing is certain, the longer we wait to take on the challenge of climate change, the more difficult it will become to find practical solutions. The old principle of "prevention is better than cure" has seldom been more important to follow than now.

Similar to other areas of the world, future African economic advancement needs to take the climate change issue into account in its political, economic and demographic planning. It would be dangerous to do otherwise, especially if climate change impacts lie in the upper range of estimates and we fail to effectively control global emissions.

This does not entail disputing the right of African countries to develop and to bring to their populations the benefits of modernisation, including access to energy. But it does entail that Africa's development faces a different factor than did the industrialised countries in the past. African countries will be able to anticipate forthcoming risks and participate in their solution. African development should therefore take place with the aim of achieving long-term sustainable and low-carbon growth.

In order for this to happen, a number of steps must occur. Firstly, much more investment needs to occur in generating regionally-specific climate data to increase **understanding of the likely impacts** and to aid the policy planning process. This must include the sharing of climate modelling software and data between countries and academic institutions, and must also be supplemented by "on the ground" analysis of climate impacts and related resource use and population trends.

Secondly, once an improved understanding of the most significant climate change vulnerabilities is in place, then **preparing for the impacts** becomes pivotal. Investment in physical infrastructure will be central to this, particularly in respect to water resources and coastal regions. But beyond these more-traditional infrastructural concerns, policy makers will have to prepare wider responses incorporating security, economic and social responses – at a range of scales and often across national boundaries.

At the regional level, climate change will trigger migration on an unprecedented scale. This will become a great additional burden for African countries to bear and a significant destabilising threat. Isolating immigrants within state or local boundaries does not represent a sustainable option. Regional solutions will have to be found through extensive cooperation and burden-sharing.

In the field of water management, the Africans Ministers' Council on Water (AMCOW) has already been set up for continent-wide cooperation, and is already putting trans-boundary water management challenges on the political agenda. Similarly, the Nile Basin Initiative, involving 10 African states, is probably the most advanced approach to date, and should be further supported.

Nationally, countries will need to identify shifting patterns of disease as temperatures change, but here international support is quite strong as diseases are targeted by specific public and private initiatives. Disease prevention will need to clearly calculate climate change factors into its future risk analyses and react accordingly.

More locally, in many areas farmers will need to adjust to more frequent extreme weather events. Critically, traditional knowledge on how to manage crops will account for less, as past experiences will no longer be the best indicator to understand the present. This will represent a major challenge to traditional societies, and will drive internal social stresses.

Thirdly, Africa can also hope to benefit from climate change, by **gaining from new market opportunities.** It has vast untapped renewable energy resources – particularly in the form of sunlight and wind – which could be the backbone of a new clean energy economy.

Costs for solar and wind technology have decreased dramatically over the last years as innovation has progressed and demand increased, and solar power is already economic compared to most off-grid alternatives in Africa. With ever-increasing demand for clean energy from Europe, North African countries in particular may be able to exploit the potential for the export of electricity.

The trade winds of southern Morocco may be harnessed to generate additional supplies of electricity. This "clean" electricity could be transmitted via High Voltage Direct Current (HVDC) transmission lines throughout the EU. Additionally, some studies predict that up to 10-25% of Europe's future electricity may be clean solar thermal power that is imported from the African desert. Countries such as Egypt, Algeria and Morocco have already shown strong interest in the Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation (TREC) and its flagship project DESERTEC. Some of these projects sound futuristic, but much of the technology exists today. Pressure will only grow for their rapid development and deployment over coming years.

A similar economic benefit may also be had from the maintenance of forests and effective low-carbon land management techniques to preserve soils and vegetation cover. Deforestation contributes around a quarter of global carbon emissions, and around 10% of global forest land is in Africa. This topic will figure strongly in the ongoing negotiations in pursuit of a global climate deal leading up to the Copenhagen Conference in December 2009. Ways will be found to strengthen the linkage of forest protection measures to global carbon markets as a means of providing significant financial resources for their conservation.

Fourthly, **combating the continent's own greenhouse gas emissions** is the last aspect of the emerging strategy, because on a global scale Africa's total and per head emissions are still negligible. Also Africa's historical contribution to the problem is minimal. Nevertheless, the issue will need to be addressed in the future.

Just like global carbon emissions, Africa's emissions have increased tenfold over the last century. Today, Africa's carbon emissions are around 800 million tonnes per annum. This roughly equates to those of Germany. Not surprisingly, the greatest carbon emitters are located in the most developed countries of the continent as well as those who extensively engage in the oil exploration business. South Africa and Nigeria account for about half of Africa's emissions, with South Africa having by far the greatest share.

South Africa's power company Eskom will be key as it generates nearly two-thirds of the whole of Africa's electricity and is extending its customer base north into its sub-Saharan neighbours. 90% of this energy comes from coal burning, which represents one of the most carbon-intense forms of energy

generation. The emerging carbon capture and storage technologies being developed in Europe, the USA and China will need to be mainstreamed to make coal-burning sustainable – including in Africa. Similarly, gas flaring in the oil-rich west and north regions of Africa account for another large proportion of the continent's emissions. Nigeria alone is responsible for almost 20% of global gas flaring emissions. Here, also, carbon-reducing technologies do exist, but need to be made competitive through state incentives or carbon-trading mechanisms.

Conclusion

Ideally, future African development should embrace the green challenge and not repeat the environmental mistakes of the developed world. This aim must not come in the way of the African countries' rights to develop, as growth is the best means to reduce vulnerabilities to climate change impacts. However, it should be economic growth which is sustainable – not growth which creates additional liabilities for future generations.

International aid can play an important role in this transition by alleviating the costs of some of the immediate climate change impacts as well as via long-term information and technology transfer. Aid will increasingly have the additional aspect of being "climate proofed".

However Africa's real potential is in its own capacity to adapt and take advantage of new global opportunities. Many of the climate changes will occur over the coming years and decades. Prudent planning can alleviate the worst.

The continent could even gain from positively embracing the "brave new world" of climate change. Its potential to better use its green energy opportunities is huge. This needs to be tapped as a new resource in the quest for sustainable growth. As Desmond Tutu has stated, the worst that we can do is to fall into a state of "fatal complacency" on the issue of climate change. The faster we recognise this, the better.

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When Iceland Was Ghana

By Þorvaldur Gylfason

In 1970, 28 percent of adults in Sub-Saharan Africa knew how to read and write. By 1990, Africa's literacy rate had increased to 51 percent and by 2006, to 61 percent.
Photo from Mozambique.

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Believe it or not: in 1901, Iceland's per capita national output was about the same as that of today's Ghana. Today, Iceland occupies first place in the United Nations' ranking of material success according to the Human Development Index that reflects longevity, adult literacy, and schooling as well as the purchasing power of peoples' incomes. Can Iceland's rags-to-riches story be replicated in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world? If so, what would it take?

Grandmother-verifiable statistics

In 1901, my grandmother was twenty-four. She had six children as was common in Iceland at the time, even if the average number of births per woman had decreased from almost six in the early 1850s to four around 1900, like in today's Ghana. In fact, the number of births per woman in Iceland was four in 1960, so Iceland and Ghana are separated in this respect by half a century or less. It took Ghana less than fifty years, from 1960 to date, to reduce the number of births per woman by three, from almost seven to four. It took Iceland a century and a half, from the late 1850s to date, to reduce the number of births per woman by three, from five to two (or 2.1 to be precise, the critical number that keeps the population unchanged in the absence of net immigration).

True, Ghana has made more rapid progress on the population front than many other African nations. The average number of births per woman in Sub-Saharan Africa has decreased from 6.7 in 1960, as in Ghana, to 5.3 in 2005. These averages, however, mask a wide dispersion in fertility across countries. Mauritius is down to two births per woman compared with almost six in 1960. Botswana is down to three, from seven in 1960. The women of Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda now have five, six, and seven children each on average compared with eight, seven, and seven in 1960.

Photo: Gunnar Salvarsson

Photo: Jóhannes Guðmundsson

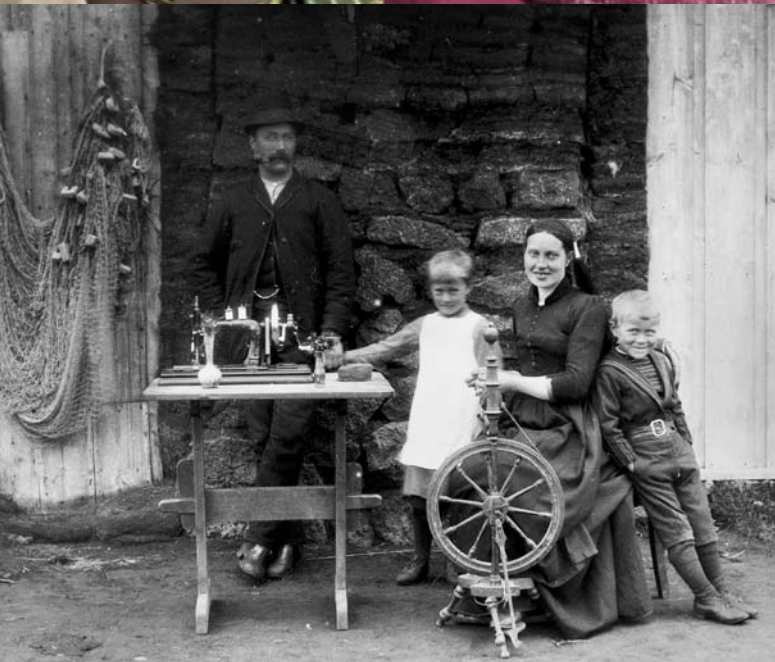*Around 1900 the average number of births per woman in Iceland was four, like in today's Ghana. Photo from Iceland.*

In 1901 Iceland's Gross Domestic Product per capita was about the same as that of today's Ghana.
Upper photo from Africa, lower from Iceland at the turn of the 20th century.

Good-bye to short lives in large families

The point of this comparison of demographic statistics is that social indicators often provide a clearer view than economic indicators of important aspects of economic development. Besides, several social indicators of health and education – fertility, life expectancy, literacy, and such – are readily available for most countries and in some cases reach farther back in time than many economic statistics. Fertility matters because most families with many children cannot afford to send them all to school and empower them to make the most of their lives. Families with fewer children – say, two or three – have a better shot at being able to offer a good education to every child, thus opening doors and windows that otherwise might remain shut. Reducing family size, therefore, is one of the keys to more and better education and higher standards of life. As Hans Rosling has pointed out so vividly in one of his video presentations, short lives in large families are no longer a common denominator in developing countries.

Around the globe, also in many parts of Africa, there is a clear trend toward smaller families and longer lives. In Ghana, for example, life expectancy at birth has increased by more than three months per year since 1960, from 46 years in 1960 to 58 years in 2005. In Sub-Saharan Africa on average, all 48 countries included, life expectancy increased less rapidly, from 41 years in 1960 to 47 years in 2005. Average life expectancy is now on the rise again in Africa, having reached a peak of 50 years in the late 1980s and then decreased mostly on account of the HIV/Aids epidemic.

Iceland's economic history through African eyes

Let us now return to Iceland and briefly trace its economic history since 1901 through African eyes, as it were. In 1901, as stated in the introduction, Iceland's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per capita was about the same as that of today's Ghana, measured in international dollars at purchasing power parity. This observation, illustrated in the chart, follows from two simple facts:

(a) Iceland's per capita GDP has increased by a factor of fifteen since 1901, a mechanical consequence of an average rate of per capita output growth of 2.6 percent per year from 1901 to 2006;

(b) In 2006, at USD 2,640 at purchasing power parity, Ghana's per capita GDP was about one-fourteenth of Iceland's per capita GDP of USD 36,560.

With the passage of time, Iceland's economy grew. The uneven trajectory in the chart traces the ups and downs of Iceland's actual per capita GDP, whereas the smooth one shows Iceland's potential per capita output, conventionally estimated by a sim-

ple regression of actual per capita GDP on time, thus abstracting from business cycles. By 1920, Iceland's per capita GDP had reached the level of today's Lesotho. By 1945, Iceland had become Namibia and by 1960, Botswana. By 2006, Botswana's per capita GDP had climbed to USD 12,250, one third of Iceland's (and ahead of Russia's USD 11,630, by the way, but that is beside the point). Put differently, Iceland's per capita GDP in 1960 was one third of what it is today, and its annual growth rate of 2.6 percent a year tripled the level of per capita GDP from 1960 to 2006. By 1985, leaving Africa behind, Iceland had become South Korea.

Piling up capital, and books

How did Iceland do it? To make a long story short, upon achieving Home Rule in 1904, Iceland accumulated capital at a fairly rapid pace, all kinds of capital, for this is what capitalism in a mixed market economy is all about, plus hard work: physical capital through saving and investment, human capital through education and training, foreign capital through trade, financial capital through banking, and social capital by means of democracy, institution building, and equality. Natural capital also played a role, first the rich fishing grounds offshore and later, increasingly, hydro power and geothermal energy, but the key to the successful harnessing of the country's natural capital was its earlier buildup of human capital. And human capital, probably, is the single most important key to Iceland's growth performance, with smaller families and steadily longer lives.

When Home Rule was achieved in 1904, most of Iceland's impoverished population was already literate because literacy had been near universal since the end of the 18th century. So, Icelanders were well prepared for the modern age into which they were catapulted at the beginning of the 20th century. Not only is the general level of education made possible by near-universal literacy good for growth, but the social conditions – law abidance, for example – that make near-universal literacy possible are almost surely also good for growth. We do not have exact measures of literacy in Iceland in 1900, but statistical information on the number of books published is available. In 1906, the number of books in Icelandic published per one thousand inhabitants was 1.6, which is more than in today's Norway and Sweden. By 1966, the number of books published in Icelandic per one thousand inhabitants had climbed to 2.7, which is where matters now stand in Denmark and Finland. By 2000, the figure for Iceland had risen to seven books published per one thousand inhabitants. It is possible that, with small editions of each book, small countries such as Iceland (population 300,000) have room for more titles. Be that as it may. Reading is good for growth.

Closing the gap

At the beginning of the 21st century, African societies face a double challenge. First, they must achieve near-universal literacy because education is the key to the buildup of human capital as well as other types of capital, and also the key to growth-friendly management of natural capital. In 1970, 28 percent of adults in Sub-Saharan Africa knew how to read and write. By 1990, Africa's literacy rate had increased to 51 percent and by 2006, to 61 percent. Youth literacy – that is, literacy among those between the ages of 15 and 24 – had risen to 73 percent in 2006. The literacy gap must be closed as quickly as possible, with no child left behind. With near-universal literacy, Ghana should be able increase its per capita GDP by a factor fifteen – why not? – in three generations, or less, as Iceland did by practicing democracy and piling up capital of all kinds through education, trade, and investment, and so should other African countries as well. True, most African countries have farther to go than Ghana whose per capita GDP in 2006 was twice that of Kenya and almost four times that of Malawi.

By now, fourteen out of 48 Sub-Saharan African countries have managed to reduce the number of births per woman below 4.3, Iceland's 1960 figure. Some distances are shorter than they might seem.
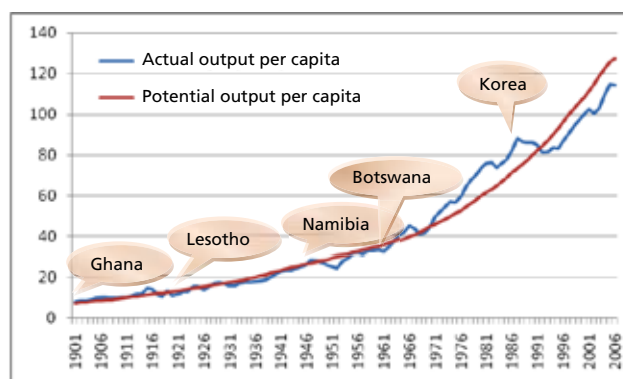
Through African Eyes: Iceland's per Capita Output 1901-2006 (2000 = 100)

Culture, Exoticism and HIV in Africa

By Inga Dóra Pétursdóttir

Photo: Gunnar Salvarsson

The reasons for the rapid spread of HIV in the east and south of the continent are varied and complicated.
Photo from Swaziland.

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Around 23 million people are HIV-infected in sub-Saharan Africa and as much as a third of the population of some countries are estimated to be infected in the south and south-east of the continent[1]. The seriousness of the AIDS epidemic is well-known as the disease affects all areas of society: the economy, employment, official administration, family ties and social interaction. When the world's main leaders met at the United Nations Millennium Summit eight goals were adopted to combat poverty in the world. One of these goals is concerned with halting further spreading of the disease and reduce its incidence before 2015[2] .

Culture

Unfortunately, it seems unlikely that the spread of the HIV virus will be halted by 2015 in many countries in sub-Sharan Africa. In the more than two decades of the battle to control the disease, many methods have been tried. In the years following 1980, it was clear that the spread of HIV in Africa was of a different character than that in Europe and the USA, where most of the affected were homosexual men and drug addicts using syringes, whilst most of those affected in Africa were heterosexual. Experts had various unlike explanations for this difference in the spread of the disease and many thought the explanation was to be found in cultural practises.

The article, *The Social Context of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa*, by the demographers Pat and John Caldwell, along with Pat Quiggin[3], caused a watershed in discussions on cultural associations in sexual behaviour in Africa. Caldwell *et al*. were convinced they had found the reason for the failure of curbing the spread of AIDS there. They recommended that those who wished to combat the spread of HIV should try and understand the notion of *homo ancestrales*. Their conclusion was that sexual behaviour in Africa was governed – as the word *ancestralis* conveys – by a centuries-old tribal and relations system, which gov-

erned social interaction of the sexes. The reason for the spread of AIDS in Africa was the African culture and the promiscuity of African women.

The Caldwells' conclusion received a great deal of attention and discussion. There was not much in the way of recent studies on sexual behaviour as discussion on this subject had mostly ceased in academic circles around the middle of last century. The Caldwells supported their theory mostly with ethnographic sources by anthropologists sent to Africa by the colonial authorities. It is interesting to study the academic articles by Western people concerning sexual behaviour from the Middle Ages until the colonial period. The historian Charles L. Geshekter[4] collected descriptions, which were published in Europe, of the African people and their sexual behaviour. He thinks most of these descriptions depict Africans as sexually insatiable, males and females alike. Their sexual behaviour was thought to be similar to that of animals, with no apparent boundaries. The descriptions typically included references to "black men performing carnal feats with unbridled athleticism, with black women who were themselves sexually insatiable".

In 1900, a military surgeon, Jacobus, wrote ethnographic descriptions on that which he observed. He saw fit to describe the genitals of African people in a "scientific" manner. He compares the African male's genitals to that of the African mule, describing them as "a bicycle's inner tube filled with liquid", by which he means colour, size and texture. He also described minutely the female genitalia and to him they seemed as outsized as their male counterparts. The female genitalia were also drier and the nerve-system not as sensitive as that of European women. Jacobus came to the conclusion that African males and females were only able to satisfy one another[5] .

It is not surprising, therefore, that anthropologists and other scholars have avoided investigating sexual behaviour of the African people in the wake of such assertions. Anthropologists were sensitive to the association of their field of expertise with the colonial period and these studies were thought to be both ethnocentric as well as prejudiced. However, this was to be radically changed by the advent of the AIDS problem and Western anthropologists flocked to Africa to carry out researches on the connection between sexual behaviour, family ties, culture and AIDS. Quentin Gausset has called this "anthropological emergency" where he proposes that the rush to find solutions to the AIDS problem has resulted in the lowering of moral, theoretical and methodological standards in anthropology[6]. As well as the Caldwells, who are demographers, scholars having resumed the debate of former times when the outlandish and exotic was emphasised.

African Culture

In the debate of the colonial period, African people had an insatiable sex drive and in the Caldwells' article African women are depicted as promiscuous where a centuries old relations system forbids them from being faithful to their husbands. This is part of what Oppong and Kalipeni[7] call the "overgeneralisation syndrome". There is no distinction made between areas in Africa, rather the whole continent is viewed as a single cultural area with one nation, the Africans. Yet Africa is a huge continent containing 53 countries and many minority groups within each country. By looking at Africa as a homogeneous whole, dissimilar historical areas, differing religious beliefs and various cultural influences are being ignored. The African cities Addis Ababa and Lilongwe have about as much in common as do Reykjavík and Cape Town.

Today, most scholars believe that culture is in a continuous state of regeneration as a result of both internal and external influences and trends. Culture is therefore fluid, unstable, ever-changing and diverse. Within each cultural group there are individuals with differing self-images, which are shaped by, for example, sexuality, age, class, position, skin colour, religious beliefs and background, to name but a few factors and these can create a cultural unit within a cultural group[8]. If this definition of culture is accepted, as most anthropologists today do, then one is not only dismissing ideas about one African culture, such as the Caldwells discuss, one is also rejecting the idea that a nation's culture is unchanging, one must take into consideration dissimilar areas within the country, as well as the diversity of the individuals within each group.

In the general debate as well as the writings by scholars on AIDS in Africa, it is, however, still a widespread belief that traditional cultural elements are reputed to contribute to risky sexual behaviour, which spurs on the spread of AIDS. It appears that certain customs have become popular both in press coverage and scholarly articles as the explanation for the spread of HIV in Africa. In these discussions it is often possible to discern the overgeneralisation syndrome referred to by Oppong. The areas where these customs are said to be practised are not described, rather one is led to believe that the whole populations of certain countries practise these customs, if not the whole population of Africa. European scholars sometimes even resurrect age-old customs which are no longer practised and allege publicly via the media that in the country concerned these customs are still being practised.

Cleansing Virgins

Stories are rife to the effect that African men rape small children to cure themselves of AIDS. In the Icelandic daily newspaper, *Morgunblaðið*[9], the trial of six men accused of raping a nine-month-old baby was reported. The reason for the rape was allegedly that the men were trying to cure themselves of AIDS. In the *Sunday Times*[10] of South Africa is an interview with the anthropologist Suzanne Leclerc-Madlala, who worked on her doctoral thesis in South Africa on AIDS and gender. She concludes that the myth that virgins are able to cure AIDS has

caused an increase in child rape in that country. She says the reason for this is that many men believe that young girls' blood is pure and for this reason safe, plus that the hymen can have a cleansing effect on their own infected blood. Leclerc-Madlala also draws attention to the fact that adult males seek ever-younger girls for intercourse for fear of contamination by older females.

The above conclusions are extremely controversial as Jean Redpath[11] discovered when she presented them to a number people employed within the child-care system, to the police as well as sociologists in South Africa. No one was able to say for sure that the rumours increased incidences of child rape and attention was drawn to economic and social difficulties as being a possible cause.

Child rape is particularly horrifying and sad if there is a connection between increased instances of child rape and the prevalence of AIDS. The stories that claim that a virgin's blood has a cleansing effect on sexually transmitted diseases are, however, not new. Tannahill[12] relates in his book, *Sex in History*, that this story has been known since the Victorian age. It was known that if intercourse took place with a virgin she could not be a carrier and also it was thought that the girl could have a cleansing effect on diseased men who could thus be cured of STDs such as syphilis.

Child pornography and child abuse are serious problems throughout the world, yet are not included in the discussion on AIDS to the same extent as in the case of Africa. Those involved in children's matters in South Africa are unable to confirm the causal connection between child rape and AIDS. The connections between child abuse and AIDS in Africa support the idea that reasons are continually being sought for the spread of AIDS through unnatural sexual activity of the Africans. Can it be possible that the old myth of their exotic sexual behaviour is being resurrected in the Western press and scholarly articles?

Dry Sex

Dry sex has also been a subject of discussion. Women are said to insert cleansing or disinfecting substances into their vaginas in order to reduce vaginal wetness. This creates "warm, tight and dry surroundings which their partners enjoy". This custom is said to be practised in South Africa, Malawi and Zambia[13]. If the vagina is very dry it could cause sores in the vagina, as well as tearing condoms, which increases the likelihood that the woman becomes infected by HIV if her partner is infected.

Gausset states that dry sex is practised by the Tonga people, amongst whom he carried out his research. He says that they consider it unnatural if the woman displays signs of being ready for intercourse when she meets her partner. If her vagina is wet this could be interpreted as her having come straight from another man, thus wet vaginas are thought to be a sign of promiscuous behaviour. Gausset goes on to say that dry sex is mainly practised by females who have already had children and they wash their vaginas with hot water in order to narrow the vagina, though they do not use cleansing agents. Gausset believes that too much emphasis has been placed on the practice of dry sex in the discussion on AIDS; it is an attempt to awaken the interest of Western scholars but this is not a part of the risk factors in AIDS infection.

Inheriting a Widow and Cleansing a Widow of the Departed's Spirit

In many parts of the world there is a custom whereby that if a husband dies the widow is either inherited by either his or her relatives[14]. In some cultures, those who inherit the widow have the right to physical relations with her whilst in other cultures it is thought necessary to cleanse the widow of the dead man's spirit. In former times, this cleansing was achieved by her having sexual intercourse with another man.

Anthropologist Paul Dover[15] states that it was common practice in Zambia that the widow moved into the home of the deceased husband's relatives. This custom is rare today, in particular due to the opposition by the Church. In former times, the material wealth of the deceased, his widow and his social status was inherited by his relatives. Today, worldly possessions are valued more highly than social status and, therefore, problems with the widow's right to inheritance have come up if the woman refuses to follow the worldly possessions of her husband.

Gausset[16], who did his field research in Zambia, says that generally people are aware that it is likely that if a man has died from AIDS, then his widow could also be infected. He says that now it is much more widespread that cleansing is performed through herbal remedies if the deceased has in all likelihood died from AIDS. In Malawi, as in Zambia, it is extremely rare nowadays that sexual intercourse with another man is the method used to cleanse the widow, rather herbal remedies are used.

Widows seldom get tested for AIDS and Gausset thinks that the reason for this is the serious social disgrace the disease is. People therefore think it better to live in ignorance rather than be judged with AIDS.

Schoepf[17] and Lwanda[18], who have both studied AIDS in Africa, point out that being inherited by her relatives is not a widow's ideal situation. She is forced into this due to financial difficulties, as well as her lack of influence as a woman. Schoepf and Lwanda agree that it is not possible to blame "culture" for this state of affairs, rather explanations must be sought in the social and economic reality of these people.

Around 23 million people are HIV-infected in sub-Saharan Africa.
Photo from Mozambique.

Aids in Africa

The Palestinian historian Edward Said[19] has explained the generalisation in Western discussions about exotic regions and their inhabitants in his book *Orientalism*. Said is of the opinion that by colonising and describing unfamiliar regions, creating theories about the inhabitants as well as by governing them, the Europeans created a prevailing image of these alien regions. This image has become dominant that today it is difficult to discuss, think about or describe these regions outside these frames of reference.

AIDS is a serious problem in Africa and cannot be ignored. The reasons for the rapid spread of the virus in the east and south of the continent are varied and complicated. One obvious reason is extreme poverty. The high proportion of itinerant workers, conditions of orphaned children who support their younger siblings and the home, few job opportunities (in particular for women) and the Church's opposition to birth control are amongst the reasons for the more rapid spread of HIV than in Western societies. However, these are not very exotic reasons. They do not arouse as much interest in the western media as in the discussions or explanations, which indicate unbridled and exotic sexual behaviour.

It is common to see articles and interviews with people who blame cultural factors when discussing the spread of AIDS in sub-Saharan Africa. It is easy to get the impression that their conclusions are based more on the ideological framework, which they have been brought up with, rather than their own experiences in the field. In their article "Seeing Culture as a Barrier", Crewe and Harrison[20] discuss the tendency of Western scientists to view culture and customs in the more impoverished countries as different from their own. Traditional culture and customs are thought to be permanent and unchangeable phenomena since time immemorial and prevent poor people from addressing their problems and acquiring modern knowledge. Culture has, therefore, a stronger grip on inhabitants in poorer countries rather than the more wealthy ones. That which was known within particular cultural groups must still be the case now.

Culture and cultural practices are not immutable phenomena. Neither in African countries nor elsewhere. The people I spoke to in a small Malawi village looked at me in surprise when I asked them to tell me about the secret rituals by which young girls were initiated into adulthood involving sexual intercourse and the cleansing of widows through sex. Without exception they looked at me in wonderment and asked, "Don't you know about the disease called AIDS?"

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Who Cares About Africa?
Perspectives from the Nordic Media

By Héðinn Halldórsson

This article is a summary, based on a dissertation submitted to the University of Manchester in 2006, for the degree of MA in Development Studies, in the Faculty of Humanities.

"At the heart of many of these problems is that public knowledge of Africa and much of the developing world is very limited. This is sometimes also the case for journalists who are assigned to cover stories in such areas" - Beattie et al. 1999:266.

Introduction – on omitting Africa

How is the African continent portrayed in television news? Studies carried out by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in the UK, show that the general perception of the developing world, received through television news is in large part negative (DFID 2000, DFID-BBC 2002). Judging from television news coverage, one gets the impression that poverty, crises and conflict are synonymous with the continent: the few African stories that get through the eye of the needle, fitting the model of pessimism and misery. Hence, the media's present role seems to maintain the ideology of Africa as a primitive place and to confirm the viewer's prejudiced assumptions. In short, the viewer is enabled to disconnect and distance himself from the people on the screen because he doesn't have anything in common with those tribal societies.

Decisions of news executives and editors are based on the assumption that the audience is indifferent to great parts of the outer world and intolerant to complexities. It is this resulting lack of coverage that has generated a negative response towards the developing world (GMG 2006). By constantly rating world news as low priority, news executives and editors "reinforce the ignorance they assume" (Rosenblum 1993:3). As long as all of Africa's problems are being portrayed as tribal and inevitable due to their African

The media's present role seems to maintain the ideology of Africa as a primitive place and to confirm the viewer's prejudiced assumptions.
Photo from Malawi.

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Photo: Gunnar Salvarsson

Photo: Gunnar Salvarsson

The media enables the viewer to disconnect and distance himself from the people on the screen because he doesn't have anything in common with those „tribal" societies. Upper photo from Malawi and lower from Namibia.

primitive nature, and as long as that portrayal is perceived and accepted by the majority of people, there will be no political solutions (DFID 2000:17).

On the research

Research aims are summed up in the following questions: 1) what are the reasons for current television news coverage of Africa in the Nordic Countries? 2) How do Nordic television news outlets portray Africa? 3) How is that coverage viewed by Nordic development professionals and reporters? The editorial process that precedes and guides the reporting will be similarly considered alongside a study of how African issues are depicted, if at all, in three Nordic television media outlets: in Denmark, Iceland and Norway. Using the conflict in Darfur as a case study, the analysis seeks to establish whether the war is being covered at all and if so, what is the approach?

Findings will be supported with views of development experts and reporters in the three countries. The respondents represent The Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD), The Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA), Denmark's National Broadcasting Corporation (DR), The Icelandic National Broadcasting Service (RUV) and The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK).

To give bad press to Nordic television news outlets for their coverage may to some look like shooting the messenger, knowing that their hands are often tied due to economic reasons, and that a lion's share of their topics and footage are provided by foreign agencies. It is therefore stressed that it is not the intention to hold the media solely responsible for Africa's depiction; - the issues are much more complex than that. Nonetheless, raising awareness of traps one can fall into when reporting on Africa, is a step in the right direction.

The Dark Continent

"...several journalists state that development is too boring to cover" - Mc Donnell et al. 2002:13.

The routine ´bad news´ stories that originate from the continent are, as a general rule, framed as "acts of God" (Carruthers 2000:227) and the overriding theme is that "Africa is a failure and needs our help´ (Hawk 1992:6). A common perception is that Africans are not particularly good at governing themselves (Philo 2001). Africa is depicted as a continent on its knees, a land of violence and desolation (Philo et al. 1999). How African troubles and dilemmas might be connected to "requirements of Western commercial and political interests" is rarely addressed (Beattie et al. 1999:246). Seldom are economic and political reasons included in African stories.

It has been argued that major stories tend to go unreported while simpler stories that are readily and "comfortably understood" because of their recurring common theme of blackness and misery, will get coverage. Myers et al. (1996) talk of how Africa is "othered" and how its stories are distorted in order to fit a certain frame. It is pictured as an object for pity rather than a player in a process of change (Schechter 1999:296).

African metaphors and vocabulary

The most consistent metaphorical structure of Africa is darkness. This predominant term which originates in Joseph's Conrad's influential *Heart of Darkness*, set in Congo, "gives sense of anarchy and chaos that is beyond normal understanding " (Brookes 1995:474). Words that appear in African stories are rarely applied to stories from other regions of the world. The audience may be unaware of it but a certain vocabulary defines a story as African, due to its primitive nature and non-Western rationale. The African story will always require a different vocabulary from stories, e.g. on Northern Ireland or Yugoslavia (Hawk 1992:7). African stories are more likely to feature words such as *bloody* (Myers et al. 1996:32) and *bloodthirsty* (Beattie at el. 1999: 254).

The news media - Power of the medium

Approximately 80% of people living in the OECD countries get their daily intake of information from the media; mainly from television (Mc Donnell et al. 2002:13). Likewise most people blame television for their negative image of the developing world (DFID 2000:1). Such an overreliance on one medium carries dangers. In a world where pain has been commercialised, suffering of humans has become infotainment (Moeller 1999:35). "It may be perfectly evident that readers are not interested in a news event", Susan D. Moeller (1999:43) states, but it is ours to find out if their indifference to Africa is to blame, or the style of coverage of the news media. Television news is routinely criticized for increasingly focusing on infotainment while shying from complex issues and analysis (Carruthers 2000:7). According to Carruthers (2000:278), the news media's responsibilities are to "force civilians to accept their *duty* to know".

The world according to the media

"Famines do not become visually newsworthy until people die" - Natsios 1996:150.

The news media, up to a certain extent, constructs its own image of the world which does not necessarily have to be an accurate depiction, but simply the result of what was possible to cover that day, taking into account cost, relevance, originality, quality of footage etc. The world according to the news media is objective; the media is and will be attracted to the unusual and the violent (Hoge 1994:143). Restlessness and the short at-tention span of the media are commonly mentioned. Having covered a story for a couple of weeks, the "circus ", as Carruthers (2000:238) puts it, moves on. Several scholars have pointed out the unlikelihood of the media covering more than one foreign crisis at a time (Brauman 1993:154, Girardet 1996:57). A constant focus on strong visual images is another factor that works against explanations and context.

Blaming the media

The media is, as a rule, blamed for the overwhelmingly negative view of the developing world (VSO 2000:6, Mc Donnell et al. 2002:13). In defence of television news coverage, however, it should be said that due to the nature of the medium, its need of pictures can limit its reporting: if there are no pictures, there is no coverage (Gowing 1996:81). Furthermore, television news outlets are often reliant on secondary or tertiary sources when covering distant countries, to the detriment of accuracy (Myers et al. 1996:24).

Gatekeepers and other hindrances

"African news is generally only big news when it involves lots of dead bodies " - Keane 1996:7.

To fully understand why Africa is not being covered or why it is being covered the way it is, we have to understand news selection, sometimes referred to as gatekeeping of the editors. Rules of gatekeepers are "written and also unwritten, influenced by precedent and prejudice and forever shifting" (Schechter 1999:54). Commonly cited factors for news selection include relevance, proximity, uniqueness, time, location, access, safety, logistics, cost and "perhaps the race and ethnicity" (Livingston 1996:72). When gatekeepers are kept in mind it becomes clearer why the media is reporting a certain story. When compassion fatigue has finally been overcome and a story is to be told, it goes through a fixed process in terms of style, vocabulary, sources, chronology and iconic images (Moeller 1999:14) to ensure that it aligns with the audiences' expectations and preconceptions. Most prevailing narratives are predictable.

Objective choices of crises

There is no shortage of tragedies when it comes to choosing the daily foreign story of a distant crisis for the evening news bulletin, provided by the wire service. This responsibility is amplified once it is recognised that the news media does have an enormous agenda setting power (Carruthers 2000:8).

"Editorially, we can pick and choose – just like walking down shelves of breakfast cereal. One day Nagorno Karabakh. The next day Tajikistan, or perhaps Georgia or Afghanistan, then a bit of Angola, Liberia or Yemen and perhaps Algeria if we are

lucky. All of it streams relentlessly into our news machines. Much of it is never transmitted" - Gowing 1996:81.

Air time is never sufficient and therefore, simple stories with an already known narrative are needed (Wolfsfeld 1997:150-151). News are no different from other programs on television, they have to fit a certain time frame. The chosen images will then eventually be given a voice and a value by a reporter; news is never from "nobody's point of view" (Carruthers 2000:17).

Compassion fatigue

"…compassion fatigue is a way of explaining why we do not care about others as much as we do about ourselves" - Moeller 1999:304.

Compassion fatigue is the reason why we choose to turn the page or switch channels in order not to face other peoples' suffering. To do that can be described as human or as a "survival mechanism" (Moeller 1999:53). However, the negative impact compassion fatigue has on the all important ratings, reinforces a formulaic coverage and establishes a shallow understanding. The misleading "scripted morality play" (Hammock and Charny 1996:115) the media constantly offers, causes an inevitable fatigue and a general disinterest resulting in an omission of Africa on news agendas, for example "Sudan is never a story" (Rosenblum 1993:22) or it is a "dog-bites-man nonstory" (Livingston 1996:84). Interestingly, a RUV reporter (RUV 2) used the term *"Africa-fatigue"* when answering a questionnaire for this research.

On frames and images

A lot has been written on framing, a some part fractured term that has often suffered from too broad and too general definitions. Framing is the way text or news is packaged with regards to tone, labelling, vocabulary and placement (Parenti 1986:220). Frames guide the receiver's thinking, prevailing over one's consciousness. Even a single word can completely change the audience's perception if it fits their prior notions. Consequently, when communicators (reporters) leave out certain words or terms that have already gained prominence and acceptance in a certain discourse, the outcome can be a damaged credibility of the communicator and a limited understanding of the audience. This explains why the same news stories seem to be told over and over again with the same images and the same repetitive vocabulary. According to Parenti (1986:220), the most effective propaganda is put forth through framing, resulting in the viewer being told what to think about a story before he is even able to form his own opinion.

Methods of analysis

The research presented is divided in two parts. The approach in the first part, which is an archive analysis of newsreels from three Nordic television news outlets, is twofold: one focuses on

images and the other one on text. The latter part of the research consists of results from two different questionnaires, reporters and development experts answered.

Problems and limitations

The comparability of the three news outlets can be questioned, given that their budget and size greatly differs. RUV is serving only 315,000 people, with limited resources and thus more reliant on wire services, while DR and NRK both operate in countries with approximately five to six million inhabitants. The small sample size and the short sample period, do not allow any major generalizations to be made based on the findings.

Findings of newsreel analysis

In a two-week period, the three news outlets ran eight stories on the African continent. The strongest sign of an omission of Africa, was in RUV's broadcasts; not a single story on Africa was run on RUV in the sample period.

Only two African stories were broadcast in all NRK´s news programmes in the sample period, tallying to a total of 50 seconds' duration. Seventeen seconds spent on a Zulu dance in Swaziland fit perfectly to what has been stated about televisions' appetite for the bizarre (DFID 2000:1). The conflict in Darfur and speculations at the time about genocide were not covered by NRK in the sample period.

Danmarks Radio, DR, aired most African stories in its bulletins, six in total, which took 6 minutes and four seconds of air time. Three of the stories were on Darfur. Supported by Robinson's (1999, 2001, 2002) work on framing and the CNN effect, a decisive frame in DR's stories on Darfur can be distinguished and a possible impact on policy makers. Why people are dying in Darfur is not clear at all since the three Darfur stories DR aired, lack in depth information. One story, however, did make an attempt to give background knowledge. In the remaining two it is unclear who is fighting whom and why – only that there is an ongoing conflict with at least 50,000 casualties. Brookes (1995:479) has shown how Africans are most often referred to as "numbers of people who have been killed".

It is apparent that Darfur was not among the priorities of television news editors of NRK and RUV in the sample period. The quality and extent of the Danish coverage compared to the Norwegian and the Icelandic coverage, is notable. Nordic television news coverage, judging by the findings of this research, gives viewers a reason for a generally negative impression of Africa. The evidence that a common way of covering Africa in Nordic television news is by an omission from the news agenda is clearly present. However, judging by a research period of only two weeks, it is not possible to take that as granted. The findings are therefore only a sign or an indicator of omission.

The few African stories that get through the eye of the needle fit the model of pessimism and misery.
Photo from Namibia.

Findings of questionnaires

Worth noting is how most respondent's personal views on the continent are a lot more positive than the image they state the news media give of it. The question "What needs to be changed about the coverage, if anything?" gave rise to some interesting answers. What shone through the answers of the development professionals was the belief that the media was not particularly interested in aid until it failed (NORAD 1). The answers of the five reporters to what criteria is used to determine which African story to cover, give an insight to the editorial process. "*Sensation, drama and race*" is the criteria, according to NRK 1, as well as national involvement. The Norwegian reporter spoke about an element of racism, or simply put, an interest only when white people were involved.

Interestingly, the two Icelandic reporters claim that African stories are valued the same way as other stories, that is, they go through the normal gatekeeping process, while their Danish colleagues state that the African story needs to be exceptional or sensational (DR 1). The view of the Nordic reporters is, in sum, negative, since most of them thought that coverage of Africa in their home country was limited and one-dimensional.

Conclusion

"The problem is fighting the breaking news trend (disaster, war, hunger), which reigns among the editors – it is going to be a long haul" (DR 1).

This paper finds that if "[t]he single most important barrier to engaging viewers with news stories about the developing world is their lack of background knowledge" (DFID-BBC 2002:2), the way to overcome this is most importantly, by improving coverage, and secondly by increasing it. The Glasgow Media Group states that if broadcasters "are not to be held responsible for the mass production of ignorance", their priorities and scope is to be reconsidered (GMG 2006).

Among other conclusions drawn from the findings is that the media may be fostering and supporting neo-colonial, quasi-racist and xenophobic feelings in its audience, with its flawed, limited or inexistent coverage of Africa. The conventional wisdom of many people working in the media - that the public is not interested in foreign news stories - urgently needs to be challenged. As Hammock and Charny (1996:126) put it: "Without access to basic information, how does the public know what it does not care about?" Findings of the research indicate that African stories on Nordic television are predominantly infrequent, simplistic, predictable, negative and sometimes bizarre - apt to reinforce the viewer's impression of the continent as passive and backward.

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List of analysed newsreels from the sample period

DR, September 9th 2004. Darfur Deadline.
DR, September 9th 2004. Powell.
DR, September 10th 2004. Darfur Deadline.
DR, September 10th 2004. Tutu Deadline.
DR, September 10th 2004. Tutu.
DR, September 12th 2004. Italy, refugees.
NRK, September 7th 2004. South-Africa, Naude dies.
NRK, September 13th 2004. Zulu dance.

Other newsreels

RUV, August 26th 2004. A new EU litigation.
RUV, September 15th 2004. South-Africa, AIDS village.
RUV, September 27th 2004. Liberian refugees.
RUV, September 28th 2004. ICRC School in Sierra Leone.
RUV, September 28th 2004. Oil Prices.
RUV, April 28th 2006. Prince Harry visits Lesotho.

Appendix

Questionnaire for development agents

1. Which images and which words come first to your mind when you think of Africa?
2. Which images and which words are most common in news coverage on Africa, according to you and what perception and favourable to whom do you think these generate among viewers?
3. What is your view on television news coverage of Africa in your country? Please provide a critical analysis.
4. In your expert opinion, what do you think are the reasons for that coverage?

5. In your expert opinion, has this coverage suffered from crucial shortcomings or omitted key events? Please explain.
6. What possible consequences/influences of that coverage can you think of or are you aware of, in your position?
7. What needs to be changed about the coverage, if anything?
8. In you expert opinion, do you think development aid governs what stories are covered on Africa in the media? Please explain.

Questionnaire for reporters

1. Which images and which words come first to your mind when you think of Africa?
2. Which images and which words are most common in news coverage on Africa, according to you and what perception and favourable to whom, do you think these generate among viewers?
3. What criteria are used to determine which African stories are covered?
4. Please comment on the quality and accuracy of media coverage of Africa in your country.
5. In your expert opinion, what do you think are the reasons for that coverage?
6. What needs to be changed about the coverage, if anything?
7. What possible consequences/influences of that coverage can you think of or are you aware of, in your position?
8. Please comment on how other international media challenges influence the character of African news reportage in your country?
9. Who is the targeted audience and in your expert opinion which level of interest do they show in stories on Africa?

Acronyms

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DFID	UK Department for International Development
DR	Denmark's National Broadcasting Corporation
EU	European Union
GMG	Glasgow Media Group
GNI	Gross National Income
ICEIDA	Icelandic International Development Agency
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICID	International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IMF	International Monetary Fund
MFA	Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Iceland
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NRK	Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development
RUV	Icelandic National Broadcasting Service
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
US	United States
VSO	Voluntary Service Overseas

Maternal Houses:
an Effective Way in Reaching the MDGs

By Gerður Gestsdóttir

Local staff at the Camoapa maternal house in Nicaragua.

Gerður Gestsdóttir is a project manager for the social sector for ICEIDA in Nicaragua. She received her BA degree in Anthropology from the University of Iceland in 1994 and her MA degree in the same subject with emphasis on development studies from the University of Manchester in 1997. Gerður has since worked in the area of international affairs and development, including at the Office of International Education at the University of Iceland and at the Intercultural Centre in Iceland. She worked as a translator and part-time teacher at the MA course in Development Studies at the University of Iceland. Between 2000 and 2002, Gerður lived in Nicaragua where she worked as a consultant for a domestic consulting service in the field of development cooperation and carried out an anthropological study among farmers in order to assist development workers in their work. From 2007, she has been working for ICEIDA in Nicaragua.

Annually, a significant number of women in Nicaragua die in childbirth and during pregnancy. The main causes of this maternal mortality are lack of access to health care, as well as poverty. Nicaragua is a sparsely populated country and, therefore, clinics within reach of everyone is not possible, although it is possible to facilitate access to the services for pregnant women, hence the foundation of the maternal houses.

The Fight to Decrease Maternal Mortality

A maternal house is a haven where pregnant women from the rural areas can stay during their last days or weeks of pregnancy, and the first week after delivery. The houses are always located near a hospital or a clinic, where the children are delivered. In these houses, the women are provided with free board and lodging, a daily medical examination, instruction on infant care and nourishment, contraception, hygiene, domestic violence, etc. When labour begins, a health care centre is close by, where the women can deliver under the care of health care professionals. These houses are mostly intended for women who are at risk during pregnancy due to their age, illness or previous births.

Nearly half of the 5 million residents in Nicaragua live in rural areas. Thereof, about 70% live in poverty. In total, about half of the inhabitants of the country live in poverty (Systemas, 2007). Poverty and maternal mortality are closely linked, and as stated in the policy of the Ministry of Health on sexual health

"*maternal mortality [is] a unit of measurement that shows social equality and gender equality. In our country there are factors that contribute to maternal mortality, such as anaemia and malnutrition among women, illiteracy/limited formal education, high number of births, poverty, poor access to health care*

In the maternal houses, the women are provided with free board and lodging, a daily medical examination, instruction on infant care and nourishment, contraception, hygiene, domestic violence, etc. Photo from Bluefields, Nicaragua.

Participation of the community in running the maternal houses is important.
Photos from Nicaragua.

centres, no use of contraception, little or no prenatal care, homebirths with assistance from midwives and family, taboos, professional assistance sought late when complications during birth arise, inadequate services at health care centres, violence against women, unsafe abortions and suicide" (MINSA, 2006:15).

The first maternal house was opened at the end of the 1970s at the initiative of women's organisations. Initially, the maternal houses were akin to birth homes, run by non-governmental organisations (NGOs), without government intervention. During the 1990s, the maternal houses were unpopular with the government due to political reasons, however, just before the year 2000, the health authorities became involved in the running of the houses and they were reformed to their present state. The Ministry of Health is responsible for professional aspects of the operation and ensuring the service, whereas NGOs have undertaken the daily running of the houses.

Women's organisations run half the houses, which now number approximately 60. In addition, farmers' organisations, religious groups, the Red Cross and other organisations run many of the houses. So-called "friends" groups support most of the houses by collecting donations and ensuring assistance in regard to the activities of the houses. This involvement of NGOs and the public is a key factor as the women will not use them unless the society has ownership of them. In 2006, over 9,500 women used the maternal houses, which then numbered approximately 50 (Medrano, 2007).

Health services in Nicaragua are organised in such a way that county hospitals operate in the largest places. Smaller places operate clinics, with or without beds and natal care, whereas in the rural areas clinic branches are operated with only one practising doctor. Finally, volunteers without any formal education called "brigadistas' and "parteras" provide service; these people are well respected and trusted by the community and participate in vaccination campaigns and assist during births. These people live in the rural areas and should receive minimal training and supplies at the clinics. However, this is not always the case.

The Icelandic International Development Agency, ICEIDA, has overseen the construction of five maternal houses in Nicaragua. Two of these are on the Atlantic coast, where maternal mortality is highest. One house has already become too small but an extension has been planned, as better service increases demand.

Community Participation is Imperative

When a new house is opened, it is important to promote its services in the community and encourage the women to come. There, the "parteras" or midwives, have an important role. The Ministry of Health constantly works at training them in recognising the characteristics of high risk pregnancies, so that those who need can be referred to the maternal houses.

The women who mostly make use of the maternal houses are those who are likely to be at risk because of age, either younger than 19, or older than 35. The high birth rate among young females is a large problem. In 2001, approximately half of all 20 to 24 year old women had given birth before the age of twenty. The ratio is even higher in the rural areas, which are serviced by the maternal houses, and gets higher as the women's education is shorter. In 2001, there were 119 births for every 1,000 girls aged between 15 and 19; a quarter of all births in Nicaragua occur in this age group (Blandón et al., 2006). In Iceland, one child in every fifty born has a mother 19 years old or younger (Statistics Iceland). The flaw in public figures is that they do not include girls younger than 15 years of age, but that age group commonly visits the maternal houses. Among women older than 35, the problem is mainly related to the number of previous births, which, as well as their age, increases the risk of problems.

However, many factors prevent women from making use of the services provided by the maternal houses and the health care system. The biggest hindrance is accessibility. Many women have to walk for hours and/or sail on small boats to get to the main road and wait there for buses that take them to the urban areas. The journey to the maternal house can therefore last for days and be costly for a woman who has little or no means. Once a woman has become ill, a journey of this sort is impossible.

Another hindrance is cultural, both the views of the women themselves, their husbands and of the community. Many women would rather have the assistance of a midwife during labour and birth than that of a male doctor at the clinic, and they find it difficult to leave home and children unsupervised (Kok, 2007:37). The "machismo", chauvinist culture, is no less of an obstacle as the husbands often object to their wives leaving the household and especially to her being treated by other males. Furthermore, research shows that about half of the women who do not use the services of the maternal houses are not aware of their existence (Kok, 2007:56).

This is precisely why the participation of the community in running the maternal houses is so important; where both the priest and local radio, along with the main organisations in the area, campaign for the houses, the services are accepted and this way information about them reaches the majority of the people. "Preventing maternal mortality does not necessarily require the use of complicated technology, but rather social commitment to public health that encourages information on health with the aid of media and members of the community" (Kok, 2007:10).

High Rate of Maternal Mortality

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), maternal mortality is defined as "[the] death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes" (WHO, 2007). The rate of maternal mortality is defined as the number of women who die per every 100,000 live-born children.

In Nicaragua in 2007 this rate was 95.5. The probability that a woman from Nicaragua dies due to pregnancy during her lifetime is 1:150, while it is 1:12,700 for an Icelandic woman (WHO, 2007). According to the United Nations Population Fund, the rate of maternal mortality worldwide has decreased over the past few years, but the decrease would have had to have been fivefold to reach the Millennium Development Goal of the United Nations (UNFPA, 2008).

UN Millennium Development Goal No 5 is to decrease the rate of maternal mortality by 75% before 2015, compared to the situation in 1990. That means that in Nicaragua, the rate of maternal mortality should drop to 40 over the next seven years. It will require a great effort to meet this goal and for this reason the Nicaraguan government has placed its emphasis on the maternal houses as the most practical option to move health services closer to those areas where the maternal mortality rate is the highest.

The service that is accessible to women via the maternal houses does not only contribute to fulfilment of the millennium goal of improved health of women, but also helps reach Millennium Development Goal No 4, which aims at lowering the rate of infant mortality. Important in this respect is the increased pre- and postnatal care, birth with assistance of health care professionals and the instruction received by the women on the health and nutrition of infants.

Total Abortion Ban

While full commitment is given to lowering maternal mortality through the promotion of the network of maternal houses, the over century old laws on abortion have been changed, banning abortions without exceptions. At the end of the 19th century, a law was adopted allowing abortions, conditional upon three doctors having attested to it that the life of the mother was in danger. This law was repealed in the autumn of 2006 and abortions rendered illegal and made punishable by law for anyone assisting in the operation. The punishment is greater if a health care professional has assisted in the abortion. The woman who chooses an abortion is also considered to be responsible for her actions according to these laws (Asamblea Nacional, 2007:143). This amendment directly defies government policy, the constitution, various laws and a plethora of international agreements on human rights and women's rights to life and health, as well as being adopted in spite of opposition by the Ministry of Health, doctors' associations, human rights organisations and more (Gómez, 2007:5-6).

Bearing in mind that over the past few years around 5,000 abortions were performed annually in hospitals due to medical reasons, it is clear that this law will increase maternal mortality. Furthermore, many factors indicate that by adopting the law and its penal framework, access to secure abortions has also decreased, especially those provided by people with health care education.

Out of the United Nations 192 member states, only five, including Nicaragua, ban abortions completely, even though they could save the mother's life (Quintana, 2007:11). However, the need for abortions is not erased by passing a law. This law further increases the importance of the maternal houses, as now women, who previously would have had the option to abort now must go through a pregnancy which is life threatening to mother and child and seek the assistance of the maternal houses.

Comparing maternal mortality over the past three years reveals that the situation is improving and beginning to yield positive results. Especially positive results can be seen in the rural areas where the maternal houses contribute significantly. However, the numbers do not reveal all. If maternal mortality by age group is examined, it can be seen that while it is decreasing on the whole, it is increasing in the youngest age group, that of teenage girls aged younger than 19. In 2007, the first year of enforcement of the new law on total abortion ban, more young girls died than in the two previous years (MINSA, 2008).

Maternal mortality is divided into three categories, depending on what causes it: direct result of pregnancy or birth, indirect result of pregnancy or birth, and unrelated to pregnancy or birth. Maternal mortality as a direct result of pregnancy and birth has decreased noticeably in the youngest age group, due to the aforementioned results in this area. However, the increase is prominent where mortality is not related to pregnancy or birth in any direct way, and there the most common cause is toxicity (MINSA, 2008). The deaths are caused by the intake of, for example, rat poison or pesticides. When a young, pregnant woman takes rat poison, it is documented as an accident due to poisoning, although many would see this as an obvious suicide, as there has been some reluctance to register a death as suicide for cultural and religious reasons. Furthermore, it can be assumed that most official numbers are too low, due to registration omission.

The increase in maternal mortality among girls under the age of 19, due to reasons unrelated to pregnancy or birth, can almost certainly be traced to the new law banning abortions. In this group of women, victims of child abuse, incest and rapes are more prominent than in other age groups. Before the new law was passed, rape and abuse victims could in many cases get an abortion, because doctors assumed that the life of the mother could be at risk because of how the pregnancy came about. This is no longer an option.

If the new law had not been passed, we could have seen more results in the battle against maternal mortality in Nicaragua. Furthermore, it has put health care professionals in a difficult position, because while they advocate sex education, the use of contraception and sexual health, they must watch many women die because the law prohibits them in doing the only thing that could save their lives.

This difficult situation adds to the importance of the maternal houses. The service women have access to because of the houses, and the education provided, continue to save the lives of both mothers and children and contribute to Nicaragua meeting the UN Millennium Development Goals.

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Back to the Grassroot: Theories on Different Approaches in Development and How They Apply to Two Real Examples

By Stefán Jón Hafstein

This article discusses an appeal for new options in development affairs and an attempt made to estimate these options with perspective on the actual situation of two marginalised groups in Africa. Scholars call for "a new approach" and re-evaluation of the theories delivered from above supposedly suited to all. Instead local and special circumstances should shape the development policy in each case. This will be examined with a view to the San people and the deaf in Namibia which are marginalised groups and in a weak position.

I. Theoretical background

"How is it possible to reshape development?", ask Peet and Hartwick (1999), a reaction to the obvious fact that over the past decades much has gone wrong in development matters and results are dilatory. Universal models presented from the outside and above are abandoned. Nothing should be taken for granted, as Chant and Guttmann (2005) put it; once experience from all over the world has been accumulated this remains: "...no self-evident system exists to approach these issues". Escobar (2005) agrees, is radical and states that the appeal is about recreating ideas concerning the third world and the post-development era. He believes that ideas on development are egocentric and technical, statistics on the scale of self-evident "progress". The view Haraway expresses and Peet and Hartwick (1999) refer to, describes the importance of accepting a complex and diverse reality, which must form the basis of development activities. The problem not only centres upon viewing the situation from below and up but also **how** it is done; local reality must be examined which is frequently complex and paradoxical, uniqueness must be appreciated without generalisations or oversimplifications as has been the case. This is the epitaph of universal economic solutions and progress models.

Photo: Gunnar Salvarsson

The deaf do not define themselves only as "handicapped" individuals who need access to the hearing community but rather as a special cultural group.
Photo from Namibia.

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Here a stand is taken with those authors who consider that the question on development basically concerns morality and reject that "all is hopeless". Development must be defined as a social gain derived from economic progress within the limits of nature. However, the question remains: Where, how and by whom?

Escobar (2005) answers this question directly and states bluntly that many critics of development have reached a blind alley. A much more radical approach is needed than hitherto. Part of the problem is precisely that development, as we have grown to know it, is part of the strategy of the rich world to hold on to economic leadership. Therefore, it will not suffice to think of "new development" but rather a new option in regard to development. That option is evident to the author: the approach of social movements of the third world should be built upon. These movements form the basis for creating a new option and a new vision on democracy, economy and society. He believes that many share his opinion with similar emphasis: criticism of institutional scientism, interest in local empowerment, culture and knowledge, which entails defence for diverse grassroots movements. The "new" encourages democracy, equality and participatory politics. Major changes in the system are not sought, rather the building of self-image and increased empowerment.

The key questions Escobar asks in regard to this are: Who defines the need? What do the people want? He wants to assign this role to social movements in each place. Development experts and institutions present needs assessment from above and create "welfare recipients" from people who then become defined as a problem. The people are defined from the position of lack rather than solutions. This is the same kind of criticism Saugestad (2000) submits when she discusses the experience gained from development projects for the San people in Botswana, to show that the "donation" in fact necessitates humiliation of those who become dependent upon it. To Escobar the definition of need is a necessary part of participatory politics of social movements as it concerns real everyday life, the wishes of those who live that life locally. Everything needs to be re-evaluated. The method being the driving force of social movements.

This appeal for "the new" and to completely abolish "the old" reverberates widely in the Peet and Hartwick's (1999) examination of miscellaneous varieties of development policies. The authors analyse and detect flaws in many of the varieties mentioned, theoretical and practical. The result of their assessment is that it is mainly the ideas of those affiliated with the so-called "Delhi Centre" which are productive. Scholars associated with it criticise the development theories on the basis that these deal only with a single prevailing idea about the world. Mob culture societies driven by consumerism can not be the answer for everyone, a simpler life style and different ideas on the quality of life must come to be. However, they are not of the opinion that the advantages of modernisation must be abandoned and thus they stand apart from the group of critics that can not see any values in western "modernism".

Decentralisation and the balance of power must be achieved where local empowerment is advocated but at the same time the productive cohabitation of dissimilar economic and cultural aspects must be accepted. The prerequisite for the success for such a change is the combat against mass illiteracy, so that dissimilar cultures might coexist. This position is unlike many of those which require "new" ways or absolutely reject "old" in that it assumes advantages from many aspects of modernisation and is not "politically bipolar" in regard to the third world and the first world. If my interpretation of this school is correct, then the way forward is to promote the values chosen by each and everyone to cultivate, with the understanding that differing kinds of economy and civilisation are possible simultaneously for those who choose to take different routes. Various options can be utilised simultaneously.

If an attempt is made to summarise into one theory that which "critical modernism" contributes, it could be found here: "Criticise everything, transform your criticism into proposals, criticise the proposals but in any event, do something" (Peet and Hartwick, p. 198). This type of strategy transforms negative criticism into positive political proposals on how to change the definition and procedures in development. This course mistrusts elite groups whether in business, the bureaucracy, science, the academic world or those who identify themselves with radicalism – whether endemic or patriarchal. Instead, the strategy emphasises the views of the oppressed, from the smallholder movements to aboriginal movements, to women who fight for gender rights and trade union movements. And even if each movement is valued in relation to its own circumstance, the critical modernism builds on coalition of these against the exploitation of the minority of the world, the spokesmen invariably being adamant opponents of globalised capitalism.

The driving force is social associations. These are united in the fight against deprivation of life-essentials and opportunities to produce them. The basis of development is therefore to free people from deprivation or preferably that they themselves free themselves from deprivation.

A good input into this discussion on dualism, "from below and up" or "the third world and the others", is Abrahamsen's (2003) reasoning on the "hybrid" position of those who live in the developing countries. The question on power is prominent in this respect. "Hybrid" societies are inbetween times and systems, e.g. old ways of living and new, which entail possibilities formerly unknown. The colonised servants had not been unilaterally led like victims into the culture of the oppressor. Oversimplification of this type is rejected. Opposition and solutions are not always and necessarily a reflection of a bipolar interplay of the "third world" and "the others", "white and black" or "women and men". Abrahamsen cautions critical authors against similar simplifications such as can be found in development theories "from above".

The San people are aboriginal natives of Namibia, hunters-gatherers who live in the rural areas without any ownership of land. Photo from Namibia.

She claims that by imagining opposition as the one true answer to the "development nightmare", without defining it or dissecting special circumstances with examples, a romantic view is taken of oppressed people who are meant to produce options without defining more closely what these are meant to entail (p. 147). The use of power is rarely blatant oppression but rather a much more complex process under various dissimilar circumstances and implementations. Dissimilar conditions offer possibilities to create opposition and/or solutions. The idea of power in this sense is therefore important in understanding that the poor have resources, which must be important for the effectiveness of social movements. This contribution by Abrahamsen is significant in order to emphasise that the solution in "new" development methods can not consist of simplified descriptions on how to overtake the state or the production equipment or of undefined "life-style changes" which entail "another type of life-style". Abrahamsen thus approaches a similar conclusion as the aforementioned Dehli school. That possibilities and the situation of those who are in a weak position spring from empowerment and utilisation of that which is the best available at each given time, instead of regression to "traditional ways" or "pure" culture without external interference. The argument that criticises economic and cultural custody of one group over another must entail simultaneous examination of epistemological, human and psychological factors, which shape the society in each place. In this way, the overall picture will emerge.

The conclusion of this discussion on a new approach to development or a shift in the whole paradigm shows that no single answer applies to all circumstances. As the challenges regarding development appear in the publications produced on this subject they are in essence three:

Lack of necessities to lead a decent life which can be defined in a number of ways.

Need which must be defined from below.

Empowerment which is the possibility to deal with the deprivation unaided.

This discussion will now be examined with direct reference to real examples.

II. Two Real Examples: The San people and the Deaf in Namibia

Here we look to "places and locations where uniqueness and not generalisations form the basis", as referred to above. The situation of two marginalised groups in Namibia will be described: The San people who are culturally stranded in the old Bushman way of living in the Kalahari Desert, and deaf Namibians who have no actual rights despite the law.

The San people are aboriginal natives of the country. They are the old Bushmen, hunters-gatherers, who gave in to the encroachment of the nomads. They are believed to number around 100,000 and live scattered in Namibia, South Africa, Botswana, and Angola as well as in other countries. Of these 33,000 live in Namibia, less than 2% of the nation, in the rural areas without any ownership of land. The right to land is one of the most difficult political disputes in Namibia and "indigenous right" is not acknowledged. The San people are always at the bottom of every survey carried out on income, life expectancy and education. Their culture is unique and close to being a kind of communism archetype, their social structure very horizontal, relations between small groups of gatherers and hunters complex, virtually no ownership rights and none at all in regard to land; residence determined by the seasons and hunting. Old ways of living have for the most part ceased to be, nonetheless the San people have not adopted new ways, except perhaps the wait for the next welfare payments, which are casual, or, if available, to get a job for the day from farmers. Social dissolution characterises these groups, unemployment is predominant and alcoholism widespread. The situation in the small yet scattered San settlements in Namibia is compared to a "state of emergency" in a report by the assistant prime minister of the country. Only a handful of the San people have completed secondary education, most have no education at all. Most of their languages and dialects have not been documented, some of these have no written language or are in a very weak position where these have been written down as very little has been printed in the San languages. Teaching material, culture and such therefore only take place through oral transmission as the San languages are the only ones which have no teaching materials at all school levels. The majority of the San people will be illiterate for the foreseeable future. Their political position is particularly weak as they have no knowledge of either representative democracy or power politics; further to this their overall association, the Working Group of Indigenous Minorities in Southern Africa, is also very weak.

The deaf community may seem a very different cultural group. But, as with the San people, they have virtually no political power, little concerted power, their cultural world is inaccessible to others and their external communication limited. The deaf who have progressed furthest in the world fight to have their right to their own "mother tongue", the sign language, acknowledged in the same way as other languages and claim they have a special "duff" culture. The deaf do not define themselves only as "handicapped" individuals who need access to the hearing community but rather as a special cultural group.

There are almost 20,000 deaf people in Namibia. However, the Namibian National Association of the Deaf (NNAD) only counts around 500 registered members. Out of the assumed 9,000 children of school age, only 300 attend school despite the law on compulsory education and only 10-20 children attend playschool out of the estimated 3,000 children at the primary language acquisition age. These therefore have no language. Almost no

deaf children have finished secondary education as almost all the children who get to go to school fail their 10th grade, if they get that far, as the teaching is inadequate and exams not tailor-made to serve their needs. The parents of deaf children are ashamed of their children and they are considered stupid and unable to learn. Very few have mastered sign language and very little research has been made on it and the stories and culture of the deaf are invisible. In the few reports available on their conditions, there are reports of oppression, abuse and ostracism, in some cases the children being tethered with the animals.

The situation of the deaf is, in particular, characterised by the deprivation of language. Not only are their self-image and awareness weaker than with most other marginalised groups, these hardly exist. Only a handful of individuals are aware of the uniqueness of the duff culture and its value, not to mention their legal or constitutional rights.

These groups, the San people and the deaf, therefore have various aspects in common:

- Cultural self-image is damaged or non-existent.
- Their collective force is negligible.
- Their positions are totally undefined, both by themselves and others, except as "recipients" in most aspects, everything comes from the outside.
- Material qualities do not exist to create a position for them in the economy or political life.
- The position of the language groups is very weak; language as a tool of expression or creation does not exist for the deaf and tied to very limited circumstances within the various groups of the San people as their languages are endangered.
- Neither group has a spokesman to speak of in the mainstream of society, neither in a cultural, social nor an economic sense. Lack of leadership characterises both groups.
- Most individuals within the groups are psychologically and socially "broken" or, as with the San people, alcohol dependent, which leads to their "diagnosis" by those approaching the issue from the outside.
- Educational resources are very limited and only a few educated individuals within the groups.
  They have difficulties seeking their legal rights when these rights are violated, whether with the police or the authorities due to their weak social position or language difficulties. (Note that this is a generalisation. There is indeed a certain level of resistance and attempts to solve matters made by the San people, internal cooperation and more which presents possibilities for the groups. Multinational umbrella associations of the San people (WIMSA) exist but are very weak; the deaf community's association (NNAD) is likewise in a very weak position. Such promising indicators in these societies could be examined in much greater detail but the overall picture is nonetheless the one described here.)

III. Reality and Theory

Politicians in Namibia and development agencies agree that development aid to these groups is urgent and pressing. International agencies, the Namibian government and contributors to development projects have therefore in fact responded to appeals based on their ethical position: these people have the right to a decent standard of living. It is the practical elaboration which stands in the way. The question is not whether but how and by whom.

The San people and the deaf are cultural groups and social units, which are defined as having neither a strong cultural self-image, economic strength nor social power. Surely, it can be debated as to whether the deaf can be defined as a social unit when most of them have no notion of the possibilities available to them nor of joining forces with others in a similar situation.

It is rather a complete lack of everything necessary, i.e. self-image, economic strength and social power. These are the three keys to achieve empowerment on one's own terms. It is therefore easy to make a counter-argument and claim that if the situation of the groups is to change, then assistance must come from the outside and above. Reality and science, previously discussed, are therefore in serious conflict from the first attempt.

Part of the problem in both cases is internal politics but not from "those above", the evil capitalism. Tribalism is one of Africa's most difficult problems. Many of the newly independent states in Africa place great emphasis upon unity amongst diverse tribes and groups. The question on "empowerment" or "cultural uniqueness" is particularly difficult for the San people in Namibia, Botswana and elsewhere as Saugestad (2000) points out. The paradox "indigenous right" versus the unity requirement is difficult to solve. A further large part of the problem is the language debate. Official recognition of the five or seven San languages and twice as many dialects and the right to learn their mother tongue to the same extent as others is a serious challenge for a country like Namibia, which has to deal with all kinds of development problems. The analogy to sign language is striking and still very few Western states have formally acknowledged sign language as the mother tongue of the deaf. Skutnabb-Kangas (2005) argues that the analogy between indigenous people, such as the San people and the deaf, is obvious and both groups will suffer the same consequences if the right to a mother tongue is not acknowledged, in other words, linguistic genocide. The children in these groups are educated in the dominant language instead of their mother tongue, which they will never master completely. The right to expression and creation of a self-image is therefore at stake and is defined as a violation of human rights.

This reasoning is related here on account of the aforementioned emphasis on empowerment in the context of social movements and strategies to oppose power that is displayed in

various ways by authors covered above. It can be deduced that for groups like the San people and the deaf, language and expression are not merely a method but the very basis of existence (Jankowski, 1997). In Jankowski's (2002) opinion much more attention needs to be given to the nature and activities of social movements, something which rhetorical scholars have just started to do (p. 163). The prevailing ideas assuming that marginalised groups attempt to attain equality with the dominant society. A more productive way would be to promote versatility and encourage uniqueness. She therefore looks to the black community in the USA to stress that crucial aspect of developing a society entails the development of self-respect, which will become part of the inner strength of the cultural group in question, which then participates fully in the mainstream of public life. This theory on societal development is based on the idea on multiculturalism.

These arguments bear directly upon many marginalised groups and those ostracised in Africa and elsewhere and directly contradict the requirement of unity and global cultural and economic views. But these are by no means simple. Where do societal development and self-respect come from? Jankowski answers this question, claiming that the dominant society has itself created "diagnosis" and thereby humiliated marginalised groups, therefore empowerment must come from within (p. 160). This sounds logical but what if the strategies and substantive prerequisites for such an appeal are non-existent? An examination of the special circumstances of the San people and the deaf in Namibia indicates in fact that empowerment can not emerge from the inside in their cases. Even a close elaboration of an analysis, such as the hybrid position of the marginalised groups, seems to only go so far in working out solutions they may already possess.

IV. Conclusion

The problem is obvious. The appeal to examine the actual situation and physical reality is obviously built on the bitter experience related to lack of success of the development methods sent from above and transferred to differing circumstances without further analysis. The appeal is therefore both legitimate and logical as the example of the San people and the deaf show. If we agree with the science and look "to places and locations where uniqueness and not generalisation form the basis" of actions, the examples show that this is more complex. For these two groups it simply does not suffice to look to solutions such as those called for when the need is almost total, i.e. the lack of economic, social and cultural elements. Nor does it suffice to place one's trust in social movements as so many of the scholars of the critical school suggest. The social movements of the San people and the deaf in Namibia are exceedingly weak and the extreme faith of "rhetorical scholars" that these will solve the matter seems naive in this context. The same applies to the requirement that empowerment shall come from within in order to build up a special and independent cultural entity with a strong self-image. Experience shows that this will not happen. And then what? To do nothing is morally unjustifiable. To transfer solutions and projects from other places and circumstances is exceedingly difficult as has been proven. Does the key to the solution then lie in concurrent input from above and below? It is likely the conclusion is as has already been described: "Criticise everything, transform the criticism into proposals, criticise the proposals but in any event, do something".

That, in any case, is at least a start.

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District Development in Kalangala

Eftir Þórarinnu Söebech

In two of its partner countries, Malawi and Uganda, the Icelandic International Development Agency (ICEIDA) has mostly directed its support to specific districts. There, ICEIDA operates in cooperation with district authorities and village communities on the joint aim to reduce poverty, improve living conditions and increase prosperity through social and economic reforms in the districts. The method chosen constitutes supporting various projects (sectors) within the same district with a view to utilising synergistic effects of the projects. ICEIDA puts emphasis on working closely with locals and leaving ownership of the projects with them. The projects are always carried out in cooperation with the public authorities of the partner country and in keeping with their policy on development. ICEIDA first used this approach in Malawi and now supports various projects in the Mangochi District in the southern part of the country. Such district approach is also currently applied in Uganda and is under preparation in Mozambique.

In this article ICEIDA's district development project in Uganda will be discussed.

Kalangala District

Uganda lies on the equator, in the middle of East Africa and has often been referred to as the "Pearl of Africa", due to its magnificent natural beauty, lush vegetation and favourable climate. The country is divided into 76 districts, one of which is Kalangala, located in the south western part of the country. It constitutes 84 islands, widely spread on Lake Victoria. Of these, 64 are inhabited holding a total of 89 villages, mostly fishing villages. Inhabitants of the Kalangala District number between 40 and 50 thousand, the majority male. In the 2002 census, the inhabitants numbered 36,661, thereof 14,348 women (40%) and 22,316 (60%) men, the number having more than doubled since the previous census in 1991 (Kalangala District Development Plan, 2003).

Photo: Geir Oddsson

Most of the villages in Kalangala are fishing villages. Photo from Uganda.

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Initially, the islands belonged to the Ssese District and later the Masaka District, but as these islands are very remote they have been neglected in regard to any type of services, administration and planning. When the Kalangala District was established in 1989, the district authorities had to start from scratch as there was a complete lack of the necessary administrative structure needed to provide the people with basic services, which had hitherto been almost completely absent. The district authorities also had to face the fact that the number of inhabitants was so low that their incomes did not suffice to support its self-sustainable operation, much less the extensive investment needed at the outset, such as construction.

Living conditions in Kalangala are among the worst in Uganda. Poverty is endemic and conditions difficult. Inhabited areas are scattered throughout the islands and many face long journeys to make use of basic services, such as social services, schools and health care. Transport is limited and costly. The journey from some islands to the next school or clinic may take hours and obviously a large part of the population can not make use of the services. School attendance in many of the villages is poor and the number of students graduating from primary school is well below the national average.

"A young man of around 30 took poison because of social problems. He underwent some treatment though (it was) inadequate...He was never taken to hospital. When his condition grew worse there was no transport to take him to a health unit. He died a week after taking the medicine." – Resident in Kalangala (Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Report, 2000:75).

Mr. Frederik Balemeezi, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer in Kalangala, describes his arrival at the district: "*When I arrived in Kalangala 10 years ago everything was still backwards and services at their worst. There was no transport, no boats with outboard motors. The condition of the infrastructure was bad with the same story for other sectors like health and education. As for health services there was only one vehicle and four motorcycles for the whole district. They had no boats and therefore health services could not reach the outer islands. With time it has changed a little, the government allocated some funds to us in 2001 so the social structure has improved somewhat, but not enough.*"

Itinerant Communities

Island communities in the Kalangala District are by nature migratory communities in that they follow the catch. People live where the fish is caught. This entails a certain type of pattern, not unlike that of the old communities of fishermen's huts in Iceland. When the catch is brought ashore it is sold and the yield used for necessities and daily pleasures, often alcohol and/or prostitutes. The consumption of alcohol is therefore common and the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases high, as up to 30% of the inhabitants of some fishing villages are

infected with HIV/Aids, which is well above the national average of 6.7%. Although fishing is quite lucrative, investment and saving for the future are relatively rare.

"Some of our parents spend most of their time drinking alcohol. Drunkardness wastes money and also brings sickness." – School children in Bbeta, Kalangala (Uganda Participatory Poverty Assessment Report, 2000:74).

The communities in Kalangala have their own views on what they see as indicators of poverty and well being in their communities, as well as their causes for their vulnerability and exclusion. In an analysis of poverty in Kalangala, carried out for the purposes of the 2003 development plan, peoples´ perceptions on poverty and gender differences in poverty emerged. The survey revealed that the inhabitants describe poverty both with a view to material possessions and non-material aspects, although the definition is clearer when it comes to material things. Lack of basic needs, such as food and clothing, proved to be the most important indicator of poverty amongst both individuals and families. The inhabitants believed the main causes of poverty were illiteracy, ignorance, financial constraints, social problems, such as alcoholism and prostitution, lack of markets and market infrastructure, as well as vermin such as monkeys (Kalangala District Development Plan, September 2003).

"The place where I'm operating is my personal home..... My home is convenient to the people..... I am overloaded in this health unit. I am everything. Whenever I go away to collect medicine or to immunise on the other islands, this community suffers. I also lack facilitation for outreach programmes." – Nurse Mazinga, Kalangala (Ugandan Participatory Poverty Assessment Report, 2000:79)

Advancing Improved Living Conditions

In the combat against poverty, inequality and poor living conditions, the Ugandan government has, like many other developing countries, produced a plan on how to eradicate poverty in the country. The plan, PEAP or Poverty Eradication Action Plan, has, since 1997, guided the government strategy plan and been their tool for achieving the UN Millennium Development Goals. It has the aim to advance improved living conditions amongst the poor, increase their opportunities to generate income, secure good governance and public safety, as well as promote increased economic growth in the country. In addition, an effort will be made to give all inhabitants access to basic social services, to live in decent housing, learn to read and write, as well as being free of possible famine over the next 20 years. With this plan as a basis, each district then develops its own district development plan, which will, pursuant to law, be updated and reviewed every three years. These plans will entail objectives and ways each district intends to use to improve the living conditions of its inhabitants. Decentralisation and participatory planning will form the basis of the district development plans as decentralisa-

*The objective of ICEIDA´s project is to promote sustainable fishing and marketing in Kalangala,
as well as improved quality of fish products.
Photo from Uganda.*

tion aims towards effective participation of stakeholders in planning and decision-making. Participation strengthens and reinforces the society in working as a whole; it supports economic and sustainable utilisation of resources and leads to increased know-how and self-confidence amongst those involved in the process. As with other districts in the country, Kalangala has its own development plan, which will here be discussed further.

> ## Facts about Uganda:
>
> **– Population 28.9 million**
> **– 87% live in rural areas**
> **– Population growth rate is 3.3% per year**
> **– Life expectancy at birth are 49.7 years**
> **– Under-five mortality rate is 13.6%**
> **– Average number of births per woman is 6.7**
> **– 38% of the population live under a $1 per day**
> **– 66.8% are literate, thereof 55.7% of women**
> **– 6% have access to electricity**
> **– Uganda was 154th on the Human Development Index in 2007**

"A Prosperous and Attractive District"

The Kalangala district authorities' plan on how to eradicate poverty in the islands is multifarious and looks to a bright future as the title indicates. This is how the Kalangala district authorities put it. The plan is to transform the district. From a state of underdevelopment to a sustainable development path, where the district prospers and the inhabitants enjoy improved living conditions. The course is set on democratic and accountable local governance, which will facilitate sustainable economic and social development of the district, based on inhabitant participation and their needs. As with other district development plans in Uganda, the Kalangala plan has a view to inhabitant needs and is based on their participation in their own development process. Mr. Frederik Balemeezi states that the district authorities place heavy emphasis on the development plan to be based on a participatory method. He claims that the most important aspect is that all stakeholders participate in the process and that the views of minority groups are heard; whether these are women, children, the elderly or the disabled, all views will be taken into consideration.

The four pillars of the plan to eradicate poverty in Uganda are used as a basis in the Kalangala plan. These are: 1. sustainable economic growth and structural transformation, 2. good governance and security, 3. raised income for the poor, 4. improved living conditions among the poor (Kalangala District Development Plan, September 2003).

Strengths, Weaknesses and Solutions

The Kalangala District has ample opportunity and every possibility to achieve sustainable development. The islands have natural resources, which provide the inhabitants with a head start. Lake Victoria provides opportunities if the exploitation is moderate. The fishing industry has, in recent years, generated major income for the Ugandan government and could become the most important source of income for the Kalangala District if caution is exercised. The climate on the islands is very favourable for all kinds of cultivation, both flora and fauna. In addition, the islands have widespread forests, which, like the lake, provide income opportunities, as long as the exploitation is sustainable.

Nonetheless, there are many challenges and a number of hindrances in the development process. Kalangala is a very remote district. Logistics are difficult and therefore transport is of the utmost importance. Today, only the main island, Buggala, is easily accessible, with daily ferries between the island and the mainland. Most of the other islands are isolated from the mainland. This fact means high production costs and poor access to markets, which causes the islanders to offer their products at low prices. Service is also poor and there is a need for more dormitories and clinics as the people have great difficulty in accessing the existing ones, even if such a service exists on a neighbouring island. Minimal mobility also restricts inhabitants' access and both flow of information and law enforcement are inadequate; obviously this has negative consequences for the communities.

Another challenge is the generation of enough income for the district for it to be self-sufficient, however the population is low and few pay public charges and taxes, in addition to which, in 2006, the Ugandan government abolished poll tax, which until then had been almost the only source of income for the Kalangala District. The islanders' tendency to a migratory life has also inhibited development in the district. Tax-collection is poor, school registration negligible and health care, such as immunisation, family planning and improved sanitation, unsuccessful and food security is threatened as agriculture demands permanent residence. Further, the lack of infrastructure is a problem, including lack of public offices, secure means of transport and electricity. Production is low and the land ownership situation unsatisfactory. Although the majority of land in Kalangala is privately owned, 66% of the household population in the district are landless as most of the owners live outside the district. Unplanned settlement is also a problem, as well as the fact that there exists no system to govern the utilisation of natural resources in the district. Negative social behaviour, such as over-drinking, prostitution and domestic violence, are also concerns that need to be addressed (Kalangala District Development Plan, September 2003).

In order to be able to address these challenges, the district authorities have proposed relevant strategies. Transport must be improved and pressure must be put on the Ugandan government to participate in such reform. The utilisation of primary school dormitories must be promoted and increased so that as many children as possible can attend school. Road construction must be improved in order to increase transport to and from fish markets. Increased income for the district must be aimed

for by attracting outside investors, e.g. for the production of palm oil, coffee, timber, fish products and tourism, as well as islanders' awareness of the importance of paying taxes. The district authorities will also be firm in their effort to attract donors to provide development aid, both international donors, bilateral donor agencies as well as NGOs (Kalangala District Development Plan, September 2003).

Gender Issues

Cross cutting fields, such as gender-related issues, have further been examined in detail, which is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Gender roles are determined and moulded by society. In Kalangala, as in most parts of the world, men and women do not have the same roles, or the same expectations. When asked about gender issues it emerges that the women in Kalangala have fairly "traditional" roles, such as childbirth, looking after children and their husbands, running the home and collecting water and firewood. The answers further revealed that the men also have "traditional" male roles, such as fishing, protecting the family, "producing" children, paying dowry, generating income and seeing to construction. Drinking alcohol is also often mentioned as one of men's roles in the Kalangala communities. Based on this result, it is not surprising that women in the district are considerably poorer than the men and the reasons for this are many. For example, for women to go fishing is a taboo, as the community believes that this would lead to the fish stocks disappearing from the lake. Reliable long-term income-generating work is scarce for women. Although women attend to farming and cultivation this is solely for domestic purposes. Even in the event of surplus production there are very few opportunities to bring this to market as both transport and market opportunities are lacking in the district. There is more illiteracy among women than men in Kalangala, which limits their chances to create work but the fact that women have limited access and control over resources is also an important factor (Kalangala District Development Plan, September 2003).

In their actions, the district authorities have as their objective to increase women's empowerment and opportunities in generating income, and a few projects have been launched to these ends. The predominant one is the Functional Adult Literacy programme, where the majority of participants are women. Through this programme, people not only learn how to read and write but also become aware of their situation within the community and learn of ways to improve their lives and environment. They also receive education in English, Accounting and Business, to name a few, which improves their chances considerably. Another project launched by the district authorities is based on enabling women to coordinate housekeeping and income generation and in this respect the growing of bananas, cassava, vanilla and goat breeding can be mentioned. Incidental to this, the district will facilitate market creation so that the women can sell their products (Kalangala District Development Plan, September 2003).

Photo: Þórarinna Sóebech

Photo: Thelma Tómasson

The district authorities and inhabitants of Kalangala team up in their effort to decrease poverty and improve living conditions within the district.
The upper photo shows Frederik Balemeezi Assistant CAO and the lower shows a girl playing in one of the district's villages.

ICEIDA Support to the Kalangala District Development Plan

ICEIDA has worked in the Kalangala District since 2002, when it gave its support to the Ugandan Functional Adult Literacy Programme (FALP) in the district. The good results of the programme soon emerged and in 2003 the district requested that ICEIDA would support its development plan. A Cooperation Declaration was signed in 2004 and in October 2006 Iceland commenced its formal support to district development in Kalangala. Following a detailed examination, a decision was made to give support in the fields in most need of such support, i.e. where most could benefit from it and where it would make the most difference. The support is aimed at four areas: administration, health care, education and fisheries, and is based on supporting the district authorities in Kalangala in reaching their goals on sustainable development and improved living conditions by 2015. In order to ensure that the ownership of the project lies with the locals, all organisation and planning was elaborated in cooperation with the stakeholders. Locals oversee the implementation of the project with the support of ICEIDA and in cooperation with ICEIDA staff. This is a ten-year project, 2006-2015, and is divided into four phases: the initial two-year phase from 2006-2008, implementation phase A between 2008-2010, implementation phase B in the years 2010-2013, and finally a two-year phase from 2013 to 2015, in which ICEIDA will gradually phase out its support (KDDP – Project Document, 2006).

The purpose of the project within the **administration** sector is "*to support the district to achieve efficient and effective leadership, administration and management of public, civil society and private agencies in Kalangala district by 2015*" (KDDP – Progress Report, January – March 2008). Effective administration in the district and successful cooperation with the private sector and grassroots movements will be promoted. In order to achieve the objectives, the aim is to develop the infrastructure, both buildings for administration in the districts and staff accommodation. The aim is towards effective administration with improved information gathering and more successful planning. A considerable part of the project concerns capacity building of the district staff. (KDDP - Project Document, 2006).

The purpose of the project within the **fisheries** sector is to "*facilitate and support the efforts of Kalangala District Local Government to achieve sustainable quality fisheries production and marketing in Kalangala District by 2015*" (KDDP - Project Document, 2006). The objective of the project is to promote sustainable fishing and marketing in the whole district, as well as improved quality of fish products; to strengthen landing sites and train control officers at beach management units, as well as improve landing facilities in selected fishing villages. In these villages, five in number, access to clean water will be improved, as well as sanitation facilities and waste disposal. These villages will be models for other villages in the district when these will be planned in the future (KDDP - Project Document, 2006).

The purpose of the project within the **education** sector is to "*facilitate and support the efforts of Kalangala District Local government to achieve equitable access for the citizens to quality primary and secondary education in Kalangala District by 2015*" (KDDP - Project Document, 2006). The ICEIDA project has the objective to train teachers and school administrators in various aspects of school work. Engage and mobilise parents in the school-work so as to attract more children to primary schools, where they will complete their primary education. A further part of the project will be to develop infrastructure, e.g. the building of dormitories and school kitchens (KDDP - Project Document, 2006).

The purpose of the project within the **health** sector is to "*facilitate and support the efforts of Kalangala District Local Government to achieve equitable access of the population to quality health services by 2015*" (KDDP - Project Document, 2006). The project will offer staff training in various aspects of basic health care. Village health teams will be trained to provide education and deal with the most common diseases in cooperation with trained health care professionals. FALP Instructors will be mobilised in this work whereas they can be found in each village and relate well to the villagers. Access to basic services will be improved through regular integrated outreaches to the villages and services for the HIV-infected will be increased. Facilities at clinics will be improved through access to electricity and water (KDDP - Project Document, 2006).

Vision for the Future

When asked about future prospects for the Kalangala District, Mr. Belemeezi is positive. He claims that he "*can already see progress in the villages. Village facilitators have been trained to go into the villages and meet with villagers who will participate directly in analysing the villages, work out their strengths and weaknesses, and recognise what is needed to improve living conditions in the villages. Following this, they can ask for improvements they want and services they have lacked.*" The Assistant Chief Administrative Officer has every belief that the development plan will be successful and that the islanders' living conditions will improve in coming years.

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Sharing the Icelandic Geothermal Experience

By Þráinn Friðriksson

Introduction

Nicaragua is, along with Sri Lanka, ICEIDA's most recent partner country following its government's request for cooperation with Iceland on account of its interest in assistance in the area of geothermal energy. In January 2006, ICEIDA opened an office in Nicaragua's capital, Managua, and since preparations have been underway for development cooperation in the field of geothermal energy. ICEDA has already launched various social projects in the country, some of which have been covered by the press in Iceland. The geothermal project, designed to increase knowledge of geothermal matters in the country, officially commenced in January 2008 and will run until the end of 2012.

Nicaragua lies in the heart of Central America, bordering the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Caribbean to the east. The country is the second poorest in the western world; of all countries in North, Central and South America only Haiti has a lower per capita gross national income (GNI). There are many causes for this wretched economic situation in the country and many Central Americans have been quoted as saying that Nicaragua is an extremely "unlucky country." It has been unlucky in both the historical and social sense, added to which it has had more than its fair share of natural disasters. If the development of geothermal utilisation in the country is compared to what has taken place in its neighbouring countries both to the north and south, El Salvador and Costa Rica, it is not hard to agree that the Nicaraguans have been incredibly unlucky in this area as well, although the situation is somewhat improving.

This article deals with ICEIDA's geothermal project in Nicaragua, its development and aims. First, however, the state of the electricity sector and the history of geothermal utilisation will be touched upon.

Photo: Gunnar Salvarsson

One of Nicaragua's official development targets is to increase the use of renewable energy sources in the country. Photo from Hellisheiðarvirkjun.

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The State of the Electricity Sector in Nicaragua

Although the population of Nicaragua is about twenty times that of Iceland, around six million people, the market for electrical power is tiny compared to what Icelanders are used to. The maximum electrical power needed in the country is around 550 megawatts (MW). In comparison, the projected energy from the Kárahnjúkar hydro-electric power plant is 690 MW. Nicaragua's electrical power needs would be easily furnished by domestic renewable energy sources as the harnessable hydroelectric power could produce around 3,280 MW and geothermal energy in the geothermal areas could produce about 1,200 MW.

Despite this richness, the nation is entirely dependent on fossil fuels for its electrical power. More than 65% of the electricity produced in the country in 2005 was through diesel or crude oil; this increased to 73% in 2007. In 2005, only 14% of electricity produced was created with hydroelectric power, 9% through geothermal power and 12% by the burning of biomass. As there are no oilfields in the country, all oil has to be imported and in these times of continual price rises, the nation's oil bills are sky high. In 2006, the total cost due to oil imports was 65% of the country's export value and the forecast for this year is that this will rise to over 80%. Under these conditions, it is beyond tears to think that less than 3% of the exploitable geothermal and hydroelectric power sources of the country are utilised.

Not only do high oil prices affect electricity consumers in Nicaragua, they also have to contend with chronic power shortages. Power station maintenance has been neglected for many years so that now 150 to 250 MW are needed additionally to meet the maximum demands between May and November. In November, the sugar cane harvest begins, adding a further 60 MW to the domestic production through the burning of biomass, a biproduct of the sugar production, and, furthermore, the rainy season starts in the autumn and therefore it is possible to increase the output from hydroelectric plants. For this reason, in the past two years, electricity has been rationed for one half of the year. This is done simply by cutting electrical power in parts of the country following a prearranged timetable. The government has had to reduce the working hours of public sector employees to six hours a day, from 7am to 1pm, thereby saving power which would otherwise be used in offices in the afternoons. This both reduces the effectiveness of the administration and is a threat to public safety. Companies subject to electricity rationing are severely damaged and potential international investors are consequently discouraged.

Thus Nicaragua's administration faces an acute problem, which needs to be solved immediately. The quickest solution to power shortage is to build diesel power stations, which has been done already. Last year, such power stations were built as a "dona-tion" from Venezuela and these produced a total of 60 MW. It later came to light that Nicaragua had to pay for the total cost of these power stations. Cuba and Taiwan have also "donated" similar power stations with the same outcome. Everybody, including the Nicaraguan administration, is clear on the fact that diesel-powered installations are not the longterm solution that the country needs. The government is now looking at increased utilisation of domestic energy sources for electricity production, using geothermal energy, hydroelectric power and wind energy. This has long been on the agenda, but little progress made.

Nicaragua's History of Geothermal Utilisation

Between the years 1970 and 1980, first the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) and then the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) undertook exploration for geothermal resources in Central America. A considerable number of Icelanders were involved in these projects, directed by engineer Sveinn Einarsson and a large number of geothermal experts from all over the world were also involved. The objective of these projects was twofold; on the one hand to locate exploitable natural resources and begin to utilise them and on the other hand to provide the locals with the knowhow of their more experienced specialists. The aim was to establish state-run companies for energy production, similar to Iceland's National Power Company, "Landsvirkjun", with the objective to "assist these nations in becoming self-sufficient".

Subsequently, exploratory drilling commenced, amongst others in El Salvador and Nicaragua. By the time of the Sandinista revolution in 1978, some drilling had taken place in the Momotombo area, near the capital, to the North West. The project continued after the revolution and in 1983 a 35 MW turbine was activated in the area and the plant then run by ENEL, which is a state-run company in Nicaragua (equivalent to Iceland's "Landsvirkjun"). Another 35 MW turbine was added in 1989 but after this the situation started to deteriorate; problems arose due to precipitation in the boreholes and eventually it became impossible to keep both turbines in operation. ENEL gave up running the Momotombo project in 1999 and Ormat, from Israel, took over the operation. Despite their efforts, Ormat has been unable to bring both turbines up to full production, although they have succeeded in increasing the production to 37 MW by setting up a binary station, which utilises residual heat from the discharge water, which would otherwise be returned unused into the ground. Ormat has also improved the efficiency of the reinjection system.

In the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, drilling began in the San Jacinto geothermal area, to the north of Momotombo. Experts from Nicaragua, along with their counterparts from Russia, were involved in this. Seven boreholes were drilled but due to lack of funds the project dwindled to nothing before a

*The aim of ICEIDA's geothermal project in Nicaragua is to assist the administration in building up sufficient knowledge in order to manage the geothermal resources in the country.
Photo from Nesjavallavirkjun.*

Photo: Harpa Elín Haraldsdóttir

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The geothermal project rest on three main pillars; direct institutional support, education and training, and the formation of a geothermal research group.
Photos from Nicaragua.

power plant was built. In 1999, a Canadian company, which is now named Polaris Geothermal, obtained geothermal concession in the area and took over the existing boreholes. They were quick to build an 8 MW plant in the area and are preparing to expand it. This winter, three boreholes were drilled in preparation for this.

In 2006, geothermal exploration permits were granted in two areas in Nicaragua, Managua-Chiltepe and El Hoyo-Monte Galán. The company that was granted these permits is GeoNica, jointly owned by LaGeo in El Salvador and an Italian power company (named ENEL to add to the confusion of this story). GeoNica has since explored these areas and the results are expected in the near future. Subsequently, exploratory drilling in these areas will be carried out based on the results of the surface studies. It is expected that it will be possible to harness between 100-200 MW in these two areas, but this assessment will be refined based on the results of the surface investigations.

Many Nicaraguan geothermal experts are unhappy about the fact that LaGeo, El Salvador's state run company, is the brightest hope in Nicaragua's geothermal utilisation, whilst their own company, ENEL, has neither the capital nor the manpower to run the projects in Momotombo, much less explore or harness power in new areas. In the same way, ICE from Costa Rica, has a robust geothermal group, successfully running the large power plant in Miravelles. Many consider that the difference lies in the fact that Costa Rica and El Salvador established their power companies before international agencies, such as the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, began putting pressure on the privatisation of state-run companies at the beginning of the 1980s. ENEL in Nicaragua, on the other hand, was already in a weak position due, amongst other things, to the lengthy civil war in the country, thus having less resistance to ideas of privatisation. The result is that both in Costa Rica and El Salvador there exist geothermal companies of international standing, with experts on all aspects of geothermal utilisation, at the same time as the potential of a similar group in Nicaragua has disintegrated, leaving only a few geothermal experts in the country. Many have cited the chronic bad luck of the Nicaraguans in this context.

ICEIDA's Geothermal Projects in Nicaragua

One of Nicaragua's official development targets is to increase the use of renewable energy sources in the country. When Nicaragua first approached the Icelandic government for help in the field of geothermal utilisation, one of the first things mentioned was the country's pressing shortage of individuals with expert knowledge of geothermal matters, especially within the public sector. Although electricity production in the country is mostly within the private sector, the state plays an important role in administration and control. The government

has to call for international tenders for exploration and utilisation permits, grant such permits in due course, review evaluations of the environmental impact and follow up on permits, making sure that agreements are adhered to. If this is to be successful, the individuals involved in these matters should have a wide-ranging experience of various aspects of geothermal utilisation. The situation in Nicaragua reveals, however, a wide-ranging lack of knowledge in this field within the administration, which in turn hampers the development of the geothermal sector. Understandably, there will be a lack of performance where the administration is unable to handle applications, review assessments reports or even identify which factors to take into consideration in assessments on environmental impact.

The aim of ICEIDA's geothermal project in Nicaragua is to assist the administration in building up sufficient knowledge in order to manage the geothermal resources in the country. The project concerns itself principally with two agencies: the Ministry of Energy and Mines (MEM) and the Ministry of the Environment and Natural Resources (MARENA). MEM is both responsible for granting exploration and utilisation permits as well as overseeing utilised geothermal areas. MARENA is responsible for environmental impact assessments and for reviewing assessment reports. The Icelandic equivalent of MEM would be the National Energy Authority, whilst the Environment Agency of Iceland and the Icelandic National Planning Agency correspond to MARENA, as concerns the geothermal sector.

Institutional Support

ICEIDA's geothermal projects rest on three main pillars, direct institutional support, education and training, and the formation of a geothermal research group. The most important of these is the institutional support, which involves ICEIDA sending geothermal experts, both Icelandic and foreign, depending on each case, to work on specific projects which fall under MEM or MARENA. These projects will be undertaken for the most part in Nicaragua, in cooperation with staff members of the ministries concerned. The aim is twofold: on the one hand to complete the projects already underway, thus speeding the uptrend in the geothermal energy sector and on the other hand to share expertise and experience with the Nicaraguans. It is expected that the staff of Iceland GeoSurvey will play a key role in the institutional support to MEM and the staff of the Environment Agency of Iceland and the Icelandic National Planning Agency in the support to MARENA. Following this, staff from the National Energy Authority will become involved in these projects and it is expected that experts from Icelandic universities will be approached in regard to particular parts of the work.

Projects to be carried out in this way are diverse. Amongst the first on the agenda is reviewing and assessing reports on the surface explorations undertaken by GeoNica at the El Hoyo-Monte Galán and Managua-Chiltepe geothermal areas. Ac-

cording to GeoNica's exploration and utilisation permit, they must submit these reports following the completion of surface studies, as well as a proposal for the next steps in the investigations based on these findings. MEM is obliged to adopt a position on GeoNica's recommendations concerning continuation; it is possible that further studies are needed or else that everything is in order in which case a permit must be issued for drilling. Three to four Icelandic experts will be involved in this work, a geologist, a geochemist, a geophysicist and possibly a reservoir engineer. They will review GeoNica's findings along with experts from MEM and assess whether the measurements are adequate and, pursuant to this, whether the interpretation corresponds to the data.

Other similar projects are an assessment of the state of the geothermal installations at Momotombo and an assessment of the drilling and production monitoring plans in San Jacinto. Included in this are also projects concerned with identifying which factors need to be considered for an assessment of the environmental impact in regard to geothermal power plants, as well as environmental planning for the areas where exploitable geothermal energy is found. There are also plans to make an appraisal of the regulations and criteria, which are in force in other countries and, based on these appraisals, make recommendations and criteria in regard to Nicaragua.

Education and Training

Education and training form a big part of ICEIDA's geothermal project, as one would expect since the aim of the project is capacity building. This is divided into three main parts: extended study periods abroad, one- to two-week courses in Nicaragua, and meetings or conferences in Nicaragua. The UN University Geothermal Training Programme (UNU-GTP) in Iceland will play an important role in the education of specialists. Over the next five years, two students per year will attend courses at UNU-GTP and, subsequently, a further three to four attend the masters degree course at the University of Iceland, in cooperation with the UNU-GTP. Training at the UNU-GTP will be offered to the staff of MEM and MARENA, as well as university teachers who are interested in including geothermal energy in their courses.

In the next five years, many specialist courses will be instigated for MEM and MARENA staff in Nicaragua. Most of these courses will be taught in Spanish, without the participation of Icelandic specialists. A variety of geothermal energy courses are offered by LaGeo in El Salvador and Mexico's Electric Power Research Institute, which are ideal for the staff of MEM and MARENA in Nicaragua. Presumably most of these courses will be extremely specialised.

ICEIDA will organise meetings and smaller conferences on geothermal matters where experts from Nicaragua's neighbouring countries will share their experiences. Important knowledge

exists in Costa Rica, El Salvador and Mexico and therefore it is a good idea to establish extensive relations between experts dealing with these matters in Nicaragua and their colleagues in neighbouring countries. Natural and social conditions are in many ways similar in these countries and a common language in this area helps matters. Relations with experts from neighbouring countries are therefore no less important than those with their Icelandic counterparts.

Staff from MEM and MARENA, as well as university teachers, will have precedence at these courses and meetings, which will be held in connection with ICEIDA's geothermal project, and it is also expected that Nicaraguan employees in the private geothermal industry will be invited to take part whenever possible. Although the aim of the project is first and foremost to increase knowledge within government agencies, it is nevertheless very important to disseminate knowledge as widely as possible within the country's geothermal sector. No less important will be to provide individuals, who are employed by the state on the one hand and private bodies on the other, with as many opportunities to meet as possible. Personal relations reduce mistrust, which is an important factor as energy resources are utilised by foreign private companies.

Formation of a Geothermal Research Group

One of MEM's statutory roles is to undertake pre-feasibility studies in the country's geothermal areas. Under the present circumstances, MEM has no capacity to undertake this role, as its geothermal experts have more than enough on their plate in processing permits and carrying out the appropriate control. One of the aims of establishing a geothermal research group within MEM is to fulfil this legal obligation of the administration. Apart from that, other no less important goals are achieved, which is to establish a group of experts with experience in geological and geochemical studies in geothermal areas. Furthermore, the results of the studies done by the MEM research group will reduce the risks of investors interested in utilising the geothermal resources and so make investment in geothermal projects in the country more attractive.

It is expected that at first the group will be composed of two to three geologists, two geochemists and four to five technicians. There is a chemical research laboratory in the country from the time ENEL ran the Momotombo geothermal energy plant, but this laboratory has had very little to do over the past decade, or since Ormat took over in Momotombo. The idea is that this laboratory will be reinstated and form the basis of the MEM research group. A few researchers with experience in chemical analysis still work at the laboratory but more experts, geologists and geochemists must be recruited.

The research group's projects have been defined, in broad terms, within the project agreement between MEM and ICEIDA.

The group will undertake pre-feasibility studies in selected geothermal areas and map the extent and size of low-temperature resources in the country. It is further expected that the laboratory will offer analysis services to companies utilising geothermal energy in the country, thereby generate some income.

ICEIDA will undertake to purchase equipment for the research group, as well as see to the renovation of the laboratory buildings. Icelandic experts will be involved with the training of experts recruited into the group. It is assumed that Icelandic experts will reside in Nicaragua, undertaking their research alongside their colleagues at MEM and share their experience. This applies to both field studies and work in the laboratory. Further to this, it is expected that most of the group's MEM experts will attend the UNU-GTP in Iceland and some, at least, return for their masters degree course at the University of Iceland.

Summary

Access to energy is one of the prerequisites for economic development and improved standard of living in the developing countries. As can be seen from the above, Nicaragua is rich in sources of energy, although utilising them has been a slow process. The outlook is that the utilisation of geothermal energy in the country will increase over the coming years with the expansion of the power plant in San Jacinto and GeoNica's power plants in Managua-Chiltepe and/or El Hoyo-Monte Galán. Along with these areas, there are many other geothermal areas, which have not been fully explored and could possibly be utilised. If these plans come to fruition, they will without doubt have a positive influence on Nicaragua's economic future. Increased geothermal utilisation will also call upon increased business of those public establishments concerned with geothermal utilisation. ICEIDA's support to MEM and MARENA in Nicaragua in the work period, which appears to be approaching will, without doubt, expedite the development of the geothermal sector and advance domestic knowledge correspondingly.

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