

2013

# Sussex International Development

Newsletter for International Development, University of Sussex

## Engaged Research - New Projects in International Development

### Innovations to Promote Growth among Small-Scale Irrigators

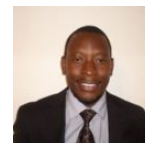
**Elizabeth Harrison, Katy Gardner and Dominic Kniveton** have been awarded a £250k research grant by the ESRC-DFID Growth Programme. This project involves comparative research in Bangladesh, Tanzania and Malawi and will examine the rules and norms governing access to and control over water by smallholder farmers, considering how these are influenced by externally-induced innovations and the effects of climate change. For example, what is the relationship between 'local' rules and 'outside' influences such as government and NGO initiatives and the activities of



corporations? How are the politics of water control changing? The project aims to determine if general principles of water allocation and equity can be identified, and what the scope is for transferring them across contexts.

The research team has partners in both sub-Saharan Africa and Bangladesh. **Zahir Ahmed** will lead

the fieldwork in Bangladesh, while postdoctoral research fellow, **Canford Chiroro** will be joining the research team in February and under-taking the Malawi and Tanzania fieldwork.



## Charity and philanthropy in a changing world

Based in Colombo and being run jointly through the University of Sussex and the Centre for Poverty Analysis, Sri Lanka, this project is looking at the role of charity and philanthropy in economic, social and health development. It is investigating Buddhist, Hindu, Christian, Muslim and secular forms of giving across Sri Lanka's capital city and assessing their contribution towards achieving development goals.

Using survey, interview and

ethnographic research methods the team is mapping flows of charitable giving and receiving across the city. The results will be used to understand how patterns of charitable and philanthropic activity vary between social classes and along gender lines, and help to alleviate poverty and other social problems in Colombo and Sri Lanka as a whole.

Principle Investigators, **Professor R.L. Stirrat** and **Dr Filippo Osella**, note that 'global philanthropic

institutions are seen as increasingly important players in the development process, but as yet the plethora of small scale, indigenous charities and philanthropic organisations found in all developing countries have largely been ignored. This project aims to address that imbalance.'

The project is funded by the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC) and Department for International Development (DfID), UK. It will run for 24 months.

For more information visit: <http://www.charityphilanthropydevelopment.org/index.html>

## RESPONSIBLE BOP

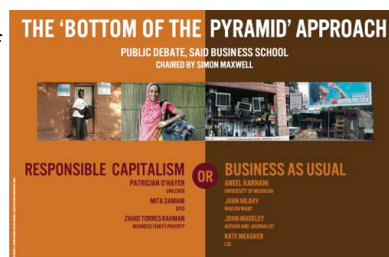
THE 'BOTTOM OF THE PYRAMID' APPROACH  
RESPONSIBLE CAPITALISM OR BUSINESS AS USUAL?

**Dinah Rajak & Paul Gilbert** are key project team members for a new research initiative.

In recent years "bottom-of-the pyramid" (BoP) schemes have attracted significant interest from international development institutions seeking to harness private sector resources for development purposes. Yet despite the growing

number of BoP initiatives across the world, there has been comparatively little engagement from development studies with this new paradigm. This project seeks to address this gap by creating a space for new thinking, approaches, research methodologies, and evidence that critically engage with the development implications of the BoP model, and examine the distribution of gains and losses and risks and vulnerabilities in BoP markets. We seek to ask how such models work in practice, what processes of inclusion and exclusion they give rise to, and whether they

can deliver development that is both ethical and sustainable. The project is a collaborative venture between anthropologists at the Universities of Sussex, Edinburgh and Oxford and is funded by the Development Studies Association's New Ideas Initiative.



### Inside this issue:

New Research Projects 1

Nuclear Protests 2

A Celebration of the Work of Prof. Ann Whitehead 3

Hot off the Press 3

Dispatch from the field 4

Who We Are 4



## Nuclear Debates in Parliament, Rosanna Marvell and Raminder Kaur



Staff and students from the University of Sussex were instrumental in highlighting the plight of residents around the Koodankulam nuclear power plant (KKNPP) in south India to British MPs. An Indo-Russian venture, the KKNPP development has been imposed upon local residents which number about 1.5 million in a 30 km radius. There have been no emergency preparedness exercises, no public release of the mandatory site evaluation reports and several environmental and safety concerns have not been addressed.

A parliamentary meeting was planned with the support of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the South Asian Solidarity Group (SASG) in the House of Commons aided by the Brighton MP, Caroline Lucas and some Labour ministers on October 18 2012. For the first time, the voices of the villages could be heard in British parliament. The first was from a video recording of Dr. S. P. Udayakumar, whose still-framed profile had



overseen all the proceedings from a large screen at the back of the room. Dr. Udayakumar does not possess the global profile of campaigners such as Arundhati Roy; he is by profession a teacher, having taught English in

Ethiopia and lectured in many universities. However, he has stood up and publicly campaigned for the rights of the disenfranchised villagers in Koodankulam, and heads the People's Movement Against Nuclear Energy (PMANE). By speaking out, Dr. Udayakumar has earned unwavering persecution and has become a virtual prisoner in the village in which he resides next to the nuclear plant.

He stated:

'We live in a kind of military camp, totally isolated from the rest of the world. Police come and knock on the doors of our houses, ask obscene questions to our women, arrest anyone indiscriminately, and we are not able to resist this. Many political parties and politicians support this ruse. ...the normal life in our area has been completely paralysed...we are living in a total banana republic. We need the solidarity and support of the international community....We also request the people of Britain to put pressure on the British government to not engage in nuclear deals with our country.'

It is key that what Dr. Udayakumar, and so many others, are asking for is *solidarity*, not aid or intervention. Following the video recording, Amrit Wilson of SASG, read out a letter received the day before from Melrit, a woman from a fishing community near the nuclear plant. Melrit had joined a large group in boats that surrounded the nuclear power plant, and recounted her experiences of police brutalities:



'I forgot the desecration of the village church by the police. I forgot the anguish of the wives and mothers of all who were taken away brutally that day. I forgot thirst, hunger... I have grown up in this wind and sun, eating the bounties of the ocean. As I stood on the boat, I remember the demands we have put across... to let go of the sisters and brothers locked up on unfair charges since September 10, to withdraw all police forces from the villages and reinstate normal life, to close Koodankulam nuclear power plant and convert it into a nature and people friendly energy production plant'.

Caroline Lucas added:

'It's tragic but perhaps of no surprise that one blogger on the ground in Koodankulam writes, 'The protesters are willing to sacrifice their lives since they felt that the nuclear power plant will result in their deaths anyway.'... I'm sure others will tell you how protesters are having their civil liberties and fundamental human rights abused and just how comprehensively the local people have lost their trust in the police and the authorities, about how the nuclear power plant will have a huge impact on nearby villages... now facing a hugely uncertain future as a result of this development imposed upon them over which they feel that have no ability to properly protest against.'

Pledges were also made to halt nuclear trade with India that has picked up since the ratification of the Indo-US civilian nuclear deal (2008). Nuclear companies in USA, Canada, France and Australia have already entered into agreements with the Indian government and Conservative policy is to follow suit.

For more information see:  
[www.southasiasolidarity.org](http://www.southasiasolidarity.org)



## Gender, Anthropology and the Political Economy of Development: A Celebration of the Work of Professor Ann Whitehead



**Ann with Bridget Byrne**

Ann Whitehead formally retired from Sussex in 2009. A renowned scholar and activist, she has made fundamental

contributions to development studies, feminism and anthropology, based on path-breaking analyses of gender relations, labour institutions and our understanding of poverty dynamics, especially in the changing agrarian economies of sub-Saharan Africa. In September a two-day celebration of her work was held in the School of Global Studies. Contributors attended from across the world and from a range of academic and policy institutions,



reflecting the broad impact of Ann's work.

## Hot off the Press!



James Carrier & Peter Luetchford (eds.) *Ethical Consumption: Social Value and Economic Practice*. London: Berghahn Books.

Increasingly, consumers in North America and Europe

see their purchasing as a way to express to the commercial world their concerns about trade justice, the environment and similar issues. This ethical consumption has attracted growing attention in the press and among academics. Extending beyond the growing body of scholarly work on the topic in several ways, this volume focuses primarily on consumers rather than producers and commodity chains. It presents cases from a variety of European countries and is concerned with a wide range of objects and types of ethical consumption, not simply the usual tropical foodstuffs, trade justice and the system of fair trade.

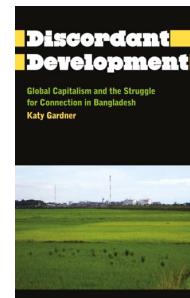
By locating consumers and their practices in the social and economic contexts in which they exist and that their ethical consumption affects, this volume presents a compelling interrogation of the rhetoric and assumptions of ethical consumption.

**Katy Gardner** *Discordant Development: Global Capitalism and the Struggle for Connection in Bangladesh*. London: Pluto Press.

What happens when a vast multinational mining company operates a gas plant situated close to four densely populated villages in rural Bangladesh? How does its presence contribute to local processes of 'development'? And what do corporate claims of 'community engagement' involve? Drawing from Katy Gardner's longstanding relationship with the area, *Discordant Development* reveals the complex and contradictory ways that local people attempt to connect to, and are disconnected by, foreign capital.

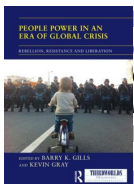
Everyone has a story to tell: whether of dispossession and scarcity, the success of Corporate Social Responsibility, or imperialist exploitation and corruption. Yet as Gardner argues, what really matters in the struggles over resources is which of these stories are heard, and the power of those who tell them.

Based around the discordant narratives of dispossessed land owners, urban activists, mining officials and the rural landless, *Discordant Development* touches on some of the most urgent economic and political questions of our time, including resource ownership and scarcity, and the impact of foreign investment and industrialisation on global development.



**Ben Selwyn**, *Workers, State and Development in Brazil: Powers of labour, chains of value*. Manchester University Press.

How do changing class relations contribute to processes of capitalist development? Within development studies the importance of class relations is usually relegated to lesser status than the roles of states and markets in generating and allocating resources. This book argues that the changing class relations are central to different patterns of capitalist development and that processes and outcomes of class struggle co-determine the form that development takes. It illuminates these claims through a detailed empirical investigation of class dynamics and capitalist development in North East Brazil's São Francisco valley. It details how workers in the valley's export grape sector have won significant concessions from employers, contributing to a progressive pattern of regional capitalist development.



Barry Gills and Kevin Gray (eds.) *People Power in an Era of Global crisis: Rebellion, Resistance and Liberation*. London: Routledge.

In the light of the recent democratic movements in the Middle East, this volume poses the question of the extent to which 'people's power' has been able to play an active role resisting neoliberalism and deepen substantive democracy and social justice. Through a

series of case studies from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Eastern Europe, the contributions in the volume provide a new set of original and in-depth critical assessments of the nature of the longer-term impact of the democratic transitions commencing in the 1980s and continuing until the present, and questioning their impact and potential influence on human dignity, freedom, justice, and self-determination, and thus opening new avenues of enquiry into the future of democracy.





## Dispatch from the Field: Geert De Neve



**Geert De Neve** and **Grace Carswell** recently spent 5 weeks in Tamil Nadu, Southern India, conducting field research. Their research focused on the social and economic impacts of India's NREGA (National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) on the rural poor in three villages of Tamil Nadu.

NREGA forms an unprecedented nationwide employment guarantee scheme that seeks to provide basic social security to India's rural poor by providing 100 days of guaranteed waged employment to every rural household, currently at a wage of around Rs 120 (£1.50) per day in Tamil Nadu. The public works for which villagers are employed consist of clearing village roads, canals and ponds. Geert therefore conducted 'roadside fieldwork', accompanying NREGA workers on their work sites along the road, interacting with workers during tea and lunch breaks, and observing the daily registration of workers,

the on-site allocation of work, and disputes between supervisors and labourers. Most of the fieldwork was literally spent on the road, moving along with the workers as the work progressed day after day, and using breaks in the work routines to

engage villagers in focus groups and participatory exercises.

While the qualitative material and survey data are still being analysed, the research seeks to understand the ways in which the 'success' of this scheme is perceived and defined by different social actors as well as to assess its wider impacts on village life. Initial findings certainly reveal that in this part of India the scheme is very well implemented and that it primarily benefits the most poor and vulnerable rural citizens, including the old, the divorced and separated, and those whose domestic responsibilities prevent them from taking up any other form of paid employment. It is also enormously important in providing an income for agricultural labourers during low seasons.

The project is funded by a British Academy Small Grant.



International Development and Anthropology MA students after their January 2013 graduation ceremony at the Brighton Dome.

### Sussex International Development:

### Who We Are

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