Autumn term 2010

Course option: NGOs, Civil Society and Development in Africa

Course organisers: Dr. Ben Jones  
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Course Objectives:
- To improve understanding of NGOs, civil society and development in Africa. The course will look at NGOs and the various contexts in which they operate (humanitarian situations, development projects, advocacy work).
- To develop a broad understanding of the policy and practice of NGOs in relation to internal systems and structures, principal activities and relationships with other actors. For example, the role of NGOs in Tanzania’s Poverty Reduction Strategy, the work of Danish NGOs in Ethiopia; and the role of international advocacy in humanitarian work in Sudan.
- To understand and apply relevant concepts and theories drawn from several research fields (development studies, social policy, anthropology, sociology, political theory) to NGO questions and problems.
- To relate individual student’s own experience to current research on NGOs wherever possible.

Key course outcomes:
- Gain an analytical understanding of the NGO literature on Africa.
- Gain a working understanding of the literature concerned with civil society and ethnographies of aid.
- Develop a critical understanding of selected relevant concepts from the wider social science literature.

Teaching approach and methods:
Alongside a lecture by the session organiser, each session will also include a student presentation and a group exercise. The intention is to generate an engaged and participatory learning environment. The success of this approach depends very much on the overall level of commitment of those involved in terms of reading, preparing, class participation and debate. We have organised the course on the premise that there are a range of experiences, perspectives and backgrounds that can be built upon and shared.

The organisation of sessions from week to week will vary. There is, however, a basic template which runs as follows:

First hour - lecture by the session organiser
Second hour - presentation by the presenting group
Third hour - group work/discussion (e.g. role play, debate, film review)

In what is outlined below, we list the readings compulsory for the session. Additional readings are available on request if, for example, you choose to focus on a particular topic for your assessed work.

For those in the presenting group you are asked to discuss a set question (that appears in the outline below) that relates to the assigned readings for the week. As part of your work as presenters you should also prepare a handout for the class and a powerpoint presentation.
There will be time allocated in the first session to sit with your co-presenters and think about your approach. **We will allocate students to presenting groups in the first session.**

There is also an introduction to the **group work** that takes place in the third hour. We expect you to make some advance preparations for the group work.

The course compendium will be available on Absalon, where presentations and other relevant course material also appears. We expect you to access Absalon on a regular basis.

N.B. In practice each “hour” will run for fifty minutes, as in between each hour we have planned for a ten-minute break.

**Course outline** (nine weeks of three hours) (10.00-13.00 – Please notice that 29/11 is a double session)

1. 24/9 Introduction to the course and themes (10.00 -12.00) KJL
2. 1/10 Civil society theory BWJ and KJL
3. 8/10 NGOs, Donors and Governments BWJ
4. 15/10 Ethnographies of Aid KJL
5. 29/10 NGOs and Development Projects I (10.00 – 13.00) BWJ and KJL
6. 29/10 NGOs and Development Project II (13.15 – 16.00) BWJ and KJL
7. 5/11 NGOs and Humanitarian Relief KJL
8. 26/11 NGOs, global civil society and advocacy BWJ
9. 3/12 Ethics and Accountability and conclusion KJL

*BWJ (Ben Jones)*
*KJL (Karen Lauterbach)*
Course plan and readings

1. Introduction – 24 September 2010 (10.15-12.00)

This session introduces the course. We will set out the parameters of how the sessions will be organised, and what we have proposed as the learning format and the forms of assessment for the module. We will go through the structure and the approach of the course. We are also interested to know your professional experience and background in relation to NGOs and development, as well as your expectations for the course. We will discuss the perception of civil society and the role of NGOs in development as presented in Danida’s civil society strategy and present an introduction to the role of NGOs in development.

Groups will be allocated. So please think about in what session you are interested in doing a presentation.

Readings:


2. Civil Society Theory and NGOs – 1 October 2010

The second week looks at different approaches to conceptualising civil society. Following from discussion raised in week 1 of the course, the point of the session is to locate the study of NGOs in a broader analytical framework. The increase in funding for NGOs in Africa in the 1990s was closely related to the “rediscovery” of civil society and its significance in developmental processes in the late 1980s. What is meant by the term? What is inside civil society, what is not? And what might be its relationship to development in Africa? Discussions and debates developed in week 2 are returned to throughout the course.

Group exercise:

1. Discuss the statement assigned in your group and write down arguments for and against (draw on the literature to make your case)
2. Try to reach a consensus decision on whether you agree with the statement. If that is impossible, vote.
3. Appoint someone to present the arguments and the final decision to the class.

Group A: A businessman cannot be part of civil society.
Group B: Activities based on kinship ties, clan or tribal relations cannot be part of civil society because they are not voluntary.
Group C: Big development NGOs undermine Third World states and marginalise local civil society. They are not part of civil society.
Group D: The demonstrations in Edinburgh in connection with the G8 summit were a manifestation of western, not global civil society.

We also look at part of the award-winning documentary “Pray the Devil back to Hell” which looks at the role of a women’s movement during the peace process in Liberia.

N.B. There will be no presenting group exercise this week.
Readings:


3. NGOS, Donors and Governments – 8 October 2010

This session looks at how development policies in Africa are shaped by the intersection of NGOs, international donors and governments. Specifically the session will examine the World Bank’s Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRSPs). PRSPs are a key conditionality in international development assistance, and involve the active engagement of NGOs in policy making at the national level. Debates on governance and governmentality are introduced, as are discussions on the translation of international policy agendas to national and local levels.

The session also includes a detailed discussion of the PRSP process in Tanzania, with a particular focus and role-play on NGOs, donors and governments in the education sector.

Task for presenting group:
The presenting group should set out and critique the arguments contained in the text by Jeremy Gould.

Group work:
Role-playing the Tanzania PRSP

This week we will look at the case of education in Tanzania and look at how education policy has been framed by the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. In the group-led component we will think about some of the difficulties of achieving a poverty reduction strategy based on a consensus between different stakeholders. This includes thinking critically about the different “bargaining” positions of actors involved in the consultation exercise, including the World Bank, Ministry of Education and Finance, and different components of Tanzanian civil society.

The suggested format is that we divide into different groups each advocating for a different negotiating position. These might be as follows:

Ministry of Education
Ministry of Finance
World Bank Tanzania team (Washington DC)
OXFAM GB country team
TenMet (a Tanzanian NGO network)

Materials to help develop you “position” in advance of the seminar will be posted on blackboard and distributed in week 1 of the course.

Readings:

4. **Ethnographies of Aid – 15 October 2010**

How do we make sense of the encounter between the developer and the community and the relationship between development projects and policy processes? This session will focus on a literature which looks at the “development encounter” and uses a range of social science theories to analyse and conceptualise the complexity of the interaction. A central concern is to think critically about the political and social dynamics of projects and their interaction with policy.

We will look at the specific case of a DANIDA funded project in Ethiopia examining how the range of actors (donors, NGOs, Ethiopian government, local participants, media) shaped the life course of the intervention. Materials relating to this project will be posted on blackboard in advance.

**Task for presenting group:**
The presenting group should explain the structure of the development project and also present the arguments put forward in the text by Fiona Wilson on the Ethiopia case.

**Group work:**  
*Reviewing “From misery to hope”*

We will look at a short film about the DANIDA Ethiopia project. In looking at the film we should think about the following questions:

- who are the different stakeholders?  
- what are their perspectives and agendas?  
- what does the film say about the project, what does it not say?  
- who is the intended audience?

Afterwards we will work in small groups to discuss and debate the merits of the film and think about how our discussion of the “development encounter” might help us better understand the life course of this project.

**Readings:**


Alongside the Wilson report, more materials will be posted on blackboard concerning the Ethiopia case in advance of the session.
5 and 6. NGOs and Development Projects – 29 October 2010

Following on from session 4, session 5 and 6 continue our discussion of thinking about development projects and the work of NGOs in the field. Projects are one of the most obvious arenas in which development workers and beneficiaries make sense of what Norman Long has characterised as the “development encounter”. We look at Olivier de Sardan’s work on development projects, and Norman Long’s approach to the sociology of development projects. We continue our discussion of the work of David Mosse and our reflections on the DANIDA funded programme in Ethiopia discussed in session 4. Ben will also draw on his involvement in eastern Uganda with a project sponsored by the Guardian as part of the group exercise.

Group exercise: “Bitter money” in east Africa?

This exercise explores different logics to development and change. In preparation it is important you read the article by Olivier de Sardan in Sociologia Ruralis as well as the text on “Bitter Money” by Parker Shipton. This group exercise is a stepped exercise and more instructions will be made available at the session itself.

Presenting group:
Discuss the problems NGOs encounter when working at the grassroots level in Africa. Using a case study to illustrate the political and social dynamics involved in doing community development projects (PREFERABLY take an example that is not from these assigned readings)

N.B. Session 6 is also used as a space to discuss the essay or synopsis that will form the assessed part of the course. We ask that you prepare a 400-word abstract of what you propose. In the abstract you should present a specific research question and outline the theory, concepts and case material that you will draw on. As much as possible this should be in a style similar to the abstracts that appear at the start of journal articles where the theory, approach and argument of the research are indicated to the reader. We then workshop the different proposals and give feedback on how best to move forward towards your examination in January.

Readings:


7. Humanitarian Relief – 5 November 2010

This session looks at humanitarian interventions as a specific arena in which NGOs operate. We go through the history of humanitarian interventions (e.g. the two world wars, Biafra, the genocide in Rwanda). By discussing a particular form and space of intervention – refugee camps – the session
also looks at the role of NGOs and discusses the available critiques of humanitarian aid that have been put forward in recent years. These include arguments such as “aid fuels conflict” and “aid is politically naïve”. We discuss the inherent dilemma in humanitarian work of, on the one hand claiming neutrality, and on the other operating in a highly politicised environment, as well as the link between humanitarian assistance and the more recent securitisation agenda. This session relates strongly to discussions that appear in the closing session on ethics and accountability.

**Presenting group:** What role have NGOs traditionally played in humanitarian relief? How has that changed in recent years? Use case studies and the text by Zoe Marriage to explain your argument.

**Group work:** For this session the Relief Director from DanChurchAid Lisa Henry (to be confirmed) will attend and give a presentation based on her experience of relief work in Africa. These include examples of interventions she has been involved in, as well as a discussion of the dilemmas that confront those working in relief.

**Readings:**


**8. NGOs, Global Civil Society and Advocacy – 26 November 2010**

The declining significance of the state and the growing significance of processes of globalisation have shifted the terrain around which development policy is formulated. This session examines the growing influence of transnational advocacy networks and their impact on public policy. Drawing on earlier discussions about civil society and the role of the state the session looks at how networks and coalitions shape the provision of public policy in developing countries.

We in particular look at the case of Sudan and the “Save Darfur” campaign. Alongside an understanding of the campaign, its successes and failures, there is a discussion of the history and political economy of Sudan. The intention is to understand the global and local linkages and the complex ways in which advocacy intersects with processes of development and change.

**Task for presenting group:**
The presenting group should set out and critique the arguments contained in the text by Keck and Sikkink. If possible relate to the Darfur case.

**Group work:**
**Sudan and the “Save Darfur” campaign**
*What difference has the Save Darfur campaign made? Read the article from Newsweek posted on blackboard which is a debate between to people who have been engaged in the campaign in different ways:*

*Who do you find most persuasive? What is their overall argument? What is missing from the analysis?*
I would also encourage you to do some background research on both the de Waal and Prendergast position and to study in detail the Abuja peace talks (concerning Darfur), which is the focus for their disagreement. Come to class prepared to debate. You might also want to think about the extent to which the analysis of transnational advocacy networks – in particular the work of Keck and Sikkink – helps us make sense of the “Save Darfur” campaign and the government of Sudan.

Readings:


9. Ethics and Accountability (and conclusion) – 3 December 2010

In this final session we discuss ethics and accountability in the work of NGOs. This includes questions such as who do NGOs represent, who are they accountable to and how do they assure their legitimacy? We look at concepts such as multiple accountabilities and discuss examples where different forms of accountability are in conflict or competition. The session also includes a discussion of ethics in the work of NGOs.

Presenting group:
Present the text by Najam and discuss the following questions: What implications can different forms of accountability have for the planning and implementation of a development project? How can NGOs increase their accountability to beneficiaries given the dominant position of donors?

Group work:
In groups discuss:
1. Discuss the different types of ethical questions faced by development versus humanitarian NGOs (clearly there are overlaps between NGO types, but the point is to try to tease out the differences).
2. Do you think NGO codes of conduct are a means of addressing accountability issues? Explain.

We will spend the last 30 minutes of the course to do a written evaluation and a discussion of what we have learnt from the course.

Readings:


Reference texts:

For those of you new to the study of Africa, one of the best general guides to the history and politics of the continent in the past half century is:


Nugent provides an overarching narrative that combines detailed case studies with a discussion of the major debates in academic and policy circles. It is written with the idea of being a course textbook and so is readily accessible and written in an engaging way.

Useful book length texts for approaching the study of NGOs and their relationship to the state are:


Much cited studies which look at the question of how to study development processes in the field are:


Please note that this year we have cut back on the course readings to make for a more focused course structure. That said, we have a range of additional texts and references which you are welcome to inquire after, particularly if you are in a presenting group or would like further advice on literature for your exam work.
Websites

There is an increasing amount of information about NGOs contained on the worldwide web. These are some sites:

**http://www.ids.ac.uk/id21/**
The ID21 site provides summaries of recent development research and is supported by the Department for International Development in the UK.

**http://www.edc.org/GLG/CapDev/dosapage.htm**
DOSA is an acronym that stands for Discussion-Oriented Organizational Self-Assessment. DOSA was developed in 1997 by Beryl Levinger of Education Development Center and Evan Bloom of Pact with assistance from the United States Agency for International Development/Office of Private and Voluntary Cooperation (USAID/PVC) and numerous PVO colleagues.

**http://www.intrac.org**
INTRAC is the International NGO Training and Research Centre and this site is useful to keep in touch with current NGO research.

**http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/global/yearbook.htm**
The Centre for the Study of Global Governance: here you will find three editions of the Global Civil Society Yearbook, downloadable by chapter as PDFs, as well as information on seminars and public events relating to global civil society.

**www.oneworld.net**
One World.net is the primary portal for human rights and sustainable development news.

**www.civicus.org**
Civicus is an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world.

**http://www.developmentgateway.org/**
The Development Gateway is an interactive site for information on sustainable development and poverty reduction, and a space for communities to share experiences on development efforts.

**www.ddrn.dk**
DDRN is a network linking research-based knowledge and development within the sectors of agriculture, environment, and governance.

**Recommended Journals**

The following journals all carry material on NGOs and the development context. They can all be accessed electronically.

- Community Development Journal
- Democratization
- Development in Practice
- Development Policy Review
- Development and Change
- Human Rights Quarterly
- Journal of Civil Society
- Journal of Democracy
- Journal of International Development
- Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly
- Voluntas
- World Development
Course organisers:

Ben Jones  
Lecturer in Development Studies  
School of Development Studies, University of East Anglia

Broadly speaking my work looks at institutions and their significance in processes of development and change. I am particularly interested in civil society organizations such as churches, non-governmental organizations, and institutions organized around family or social obligations and their relationship to government. My regional expertise is on sub-Saharan Africa with a particular focus on the contrasting cases of Uganda and Nigeria.

The International African Library has just published my book *Beyond the State in Rural Uganda*. The book is based on research carried out in the Teso region of eastern Uganda and was awarded the Elliott P. Skinner Prize by the American Anthropological Association. Current work looks at patterns of political development and social differentiation in the Igbo-speaking part of southeastern Nigeria. My work is part-funded by the Danish Social Science Research Council and is supported by Roskilde University in Denmark and the Institute of African Studies, University of Nigeria, Nsukka in Nigeria.

Prior to joining Development Studies at UEA I was a lecturer with the Centre for Civil Society in the Department of Social Policy at the London School of Economics. I have also worked for the World Bank in the Poverty Reduction Research Group, where I was part of a team responsible for the *Voices of the Poor* study a background piece for the *World Development Report 2000/01: Attacking Poverty*. As a student I interned for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Democratic National Committee.

I currently write for *The Guardian* newspaper on their Katine development initiative in eastern Uganda (www.guardian.co.uk/katine).

Karen Lauterbach  
Ph.D. in International Development Studies from Roskilde University, 2009.

My Ph.D. thesis is an analysis of pastorship in neo-Pentecostal/charismatic churches in southern Ghana. It is an investigation of how and why Ghanaian pastors become pastors and how this process is a way to achieve status, wealth and power. The thesis explores the interactions between religion, social ascension and politics as expressed in the construction and meaning of pastorship. Pastors as new figures of success are seen as part of a broader pattern of reconfiguration of elites that has come with the expansion of the public sphere and political and economic liberalisation.

I have formerly been lecturing on religion and secularization, development policy and actors, development tools and management, and planning, monitoring and evaluation of development interventions.

I have practical experience from my former employment in a Danish NGO in particular with relief interventions and integrated development projects in the Horn of Africa. Thematically these interventions were focused on food security, agriculture and sustainable livelihoods. I have been involved in other NGO projects in Senegal and Burkina Faso in West Africa and have a broad experience with projects on for instance alphabetisation, urban development, income generating activities and rural radios.

I am currently working at the Danish Agency for Science, Technology and Innovation.