D+C

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Aid effectiveness
SDG success depends on better international cooperation

Disabilities
Consider social inclusion early on in development plans

Vocational training
Challenges small and mid-sized companies face in Brazil

Life chances in rural areas

Title: Farmers' market in rural Burkina Faso.
Photo: Böthling/Photography

Focus: Life chances in rural areas

Editorial

Rural urbanisation

In Germany, rural life is not at all like rural life in Africa and other less developed world regions, but resembles urban life in many ways. The infrastructure tends to be very good, at least by global standards, and so does access to services.

Even in remote German villages, there is employment in different trades and professions, though the variety is of course smaller than in the cities. The roads are good. There are schools, hospitals and supermarkets, and the power grid does not let people down. In regard to educational opportunities, professional options, health care, leisure activities and personal choices in general rural life in many advanced nations has actually become quite urban.

Matters are completely different in the rural areas of developing countries, where poverty and the lack of opportunities haunt masses of people. At first glance, their needs are not as obvious as the misery of slum dwellers in the cities, but rural poverty is even more common and often more desperate.

All too often, the state itself is absent from rural areas, as is evident in the lack of roads, electric power or facilities for health care and education. In such an underdeveloped environment, no trades can prosper and no businesses grow, and only agriculture provides livelihoods.

Accordingly, farms are extremely important and get most of the attention. Promoting them is essential for rural development. The challenges are huge, however, and require donor support, at least initially, as experts argue. Building and developing infrastructure is indispensable. Roads, water supply and other hard infrastructure matter, and so do schools, health centres and access to public administrations in general. Extension services must make regionally specific advice available and inform peasants about farming methods, seed, irrigation, fertiliser et cetera. Nowadays, the impacts of climate change must obviously be taken into account too.

The best kind of rural development would be the emergence of many small towns as nodes linking the villages. If farmers thrived, new markets would emerge to supply them with the inputs they need. Moreover, their products could be processed at the town level, adding even more opportunities for income generation and employment.

For many reasons, lots of small towns are preferable to megacity growth. Small towns are more attractive in environmental, social and economic terms. They are thus more sustainable than huge agglomerations, which mostly are overburdened anyway. Ultimately, rural life in developing regions might become urbanised in a similar way as it is in Germany today.

Such a development could serve democratisation too. As stated above, there is an utter lack of state institutions and services in rural areas. Elected governments really do not have much of a role to play, and traditions and clan elders set the rules accordingly. Democratic modernisation depends on infrastructure and leads to better infrastructure. Roads, water mains, schools and hospitals are the kind of proof of effective governance that allows people to have faith in their state, which in turn fosters its legitimacy. The more people identify with the state, the system of government and democracy, the less their lives will be determined by tradition alone, and the more they will be able to take their fate into their own hands.

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Entwicklung und Zusammenarbeit.
Both language versions
at www.DandC.eu

Tribune

Sprague/Lineair

Social inclusion

A recent study from scholars at Berlin's Humboldt University makes proposals on what development agencies can do to promote social inclusion of people with disabilities. **Bettina Kieck** led the team and elaborates core findings. Page 36

Investing in vocational training

Small and mid-sized enterprises (SMEs) generate jobs and incomes. They are the backbone of a strong economy. **Bruno Wenn** of DEG, the German development financing institution, discusses why Brazilian SMEs are well advised to invest in vocational training. Page 38

Debate

Yui Mok/empics/picture-alliance

What Brexit means to South Asians

Most of Britain's South Asians wanted the UK to remain an EU member. Brexit will boost xenophobia and racism, argues **Ceciel Shiraz Raj,** a member of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and the Pakistan-India Peoples Forum for Peace and Democracy. Many migrants worry about their future. Page 41

Thierry Gougnon/Reuters

Summer special

Last summer, the editorial team of D+C/E+Z recommended some of our favourite books for reading. For this year's summer special, we chose to review movies. Just as the books last year, all movies tackle issues of developmental relevance. We find them worth watching and think you, our readers, might like them too.

Fighting outdated traditions

The movie "Difret" by Ethiopian director Zeresenay Berhane Mehari bridges the divide between traditional rural worldviews and modern Ethiopia. It offers insights into a culture that the western public normally does not get.

By Dagmar Wolf

Hirut, a 14-year old girl, is proud of the report card she has just been given. The teacher even praised her in class. As she is happily running home, she suddenly hears hoofbeats. Armed men on horseback surround her – and then abduct her. The report card ends up in the dust.

Hirut is locked up in a cabin where one of the kidnappers rapes her. According to a tradition called "telefa", such violence goes unpunished if the man later marries his victim. Telefa has officially been declared illegal, but is still quite common in rural areas.

Hirut manages to escape and takes along her tormentor's rifle. He runs after her, and she shoots him. As result, she is accused of murder and is likely to be sentenced to death.

Meaza Ashenafi, a lawyer, volunteers to defend Hirut in court. She leads Andenet, a non-governmental organisation that promotes women's and children's rights. The film is not an emotional court drama, however, but takes a close look at the social context in a very sensitive manner. The gaps between rural and urban life are huge. In Addis Ababa, the capital city, professionals use computers and telephones, but time seems to stand still in what looks like Arcadian villages.

In the villages, the judges of the state court matter less than the council of elders. When Hirut's father speaks in defence of his daughter before the council, men from the village praise tradition and insult the local teachers whom they blame of instilling the wrong values in the young generation. The elders decide that Hirut's father must pay her kidnapper's father a compensation and that the girl may not return to live in the village. The only upside is that they do not demand her death.

In the meantime, the lawyer gets Hirut into an urban orphanage. For a while, the very existence of her NGO is at risk. The reason is that Meaza decides to take a government minister to court, arguing that Hirut is in trouble because the administration he leads is not enforcing the law. In response, the government first suspends her NGO's licence, but then surprisingly renews it. In the end, the court that tries Hirut finds her not guilty. The media cover the event – and radio news is particularly important in the villages. It is not a perfect happy ending, because the teenager's life has been uprooted for ever.

Difret ist based on a real case that set the precedent of telefa definitely being illegal in 1996. This was an important turning point in terms of rural women's rights. The punishment for telefa can be 15 years of prison – or more. Nonetheless, the tradition is still alive in some remote rural areas even today.

Accordingly, the director wants to convince and enlighten Ethiopians. He treats all of the film's characters with equal respect. They state clearly what they think is right – and why they think so. The film does not use artistic ambiguity. Its focus is on unambiguous debate and comprehensive discourse.

Zeresenay went to film school in Los Angeles, but he does not indulge in Hollywood effects and does not use sensationalist scenes. He is not keen on breathtaking suspense, but rather wants to raise awareness. Therefore, the film's original language is Amharic rather than English. It certainly helped to attract international attention, however, that Hollywood star Angelina Jolie was the movie's executive producer.

The Ethiopian government supported the production of Difret too. Unfortunately, there is reason to doubt that the Ethiopian state would still be prepared to backtrack in confrontation with an assertive NGO activist the way it did in the case of Andenet. The same party is still in power, but it's attitude is becoming ever more authoritarian. If it decides to close down an NGO these days, it seems unlikely that it might reconsider and allow the NGO to carry on afterwards.

Film

Difret, 2014, Ethiopia,
director: Zeresenay Berhane Mehari

AlamodeFilm

Hirut wants to finish school in order to go to college.

Unthinkable

It is all too normal that women suffer violence, and it is easy to look away, but that was not what Claudia Schmid wanted to do. The film director went to the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and made the strenuous and dangerous trip on her own. The international public hardly takes note of the unbelievable excesses of violence women suffer in that region. In her documentary film "Voices of violence", Schmid lets the victims themselves speak.

By Sabine Balk

The eastern DRC is a sparsely populated area and largely lawless, since rebel movements hold sway there. They terrorise the rural people and attack villages. They kill, rob and abduct women and children. In forest camps, the militia fighters often rape and torture women and girls.

Summer special

Claudia Schmid travelled to the province of North Kivu twice and spent several months there. She found some women who had been abused and were prepared to speak about their traumatic experiences in front of the camera.

The film director did not only focus on women, however, but also interviewed men. Their statements reveal society's deep-rooted misogyny. The men, who obviously have nothing meaningful to do with their lives, say that women must obey them without any reservations, and that those who do not so are not good wives and therefore deserve to be beaten and abandoned.

In Voices of violence, Vumilla and other women tell viewers what rebels did to them. Their gestures are vivid and expressive. Vumilla says that the men raped her and killed her little daughter before her eyes. Vumilla was abducted to a rebel camp with other women and kept as a sex slave for weeks. One of the most horrible episodes is told by Walungu. She had to watch fighters cut an unborn baby from a pregnant woman's belly and then force her to eat it.

The women in the film cry and bend over in pain as they tell their stories. The viewer feels awful too and would like to cry along. To any sane-minded person, this kind of violence is unthinkable.

It is painful to watch this documentary, and one is tempted to leave the cinema or switch off the TV set. But we must not do so. Atrocities of this kind happen, and the public must know. Otherwise, nothing will change.

We all bear some guilt for what is happening in far-away eastern Congo. The rebels fund their militias by selling the resources that are exploited in the no-man's land they control. Many of these minerals, Coltan, in particular, are needed to make smartphones. The rich world's demand for those devices is fuelling conflict and violence in the DRC.

Claudia Schmid's movie does not leave its audience in hopeless despair. On the contrary, it offers orientation in a double sense. On the one hand, it elaborates that consumers can put pressure on smartphone companies in order to change something. On the other hand, it shows that Vumilla and the other women have found help.

Missio, a Catholic aid organisation, is one of the few international agencies that are active in eastern Congo. It has set up rehabilitation centres for traumatised women. Vumilla says she would have lost her mind had she not gotten psychological assistance fast. The trauma centres help women to regain the courage they need to face life. The crucial thing is to talk about the horrors they have experienced. Many more facilities of this kind are needed in the DRC – and in the world's other strife-torn places.

The documentary's topic is deeply disturbing and stays on one's mind for a long time. Perhaps some viewers will reconsider their naïve attitude to their mobile phones. There are a few manufacturers that avoid the use of conflict resources. Fairphone in the Netherlands and Shiftphone in Germany are two such companies. Moreover, one can support Missio's campaign for "clean cell phones".

Press photo

Vumilla (l.) and Walungu speak about the atrocities they suffered in the film.

Film

Voices of violence, 2016, Germany, director: Claudia Schmid

Links

Missio – Aktion saubere Handys (German):
https://www.missio-hilft.de/de/aktion/schutzengel/fuer-familien-in-not-weltweit/saubere-handys/

Fairphone:
https://www.fairphone.com/

Shiftphone (German):
http://www.shiftphones.com/

A Muslim's response to Islamist terrorism

In the west, some still complain that the response of Muslim intellectuals to Islamist terrorism is somewhat half-hearted. They should watch Abderrahmane Sissako's movie Timbuktu. It deals with a fundamentalist militia taking over a city in the Sahel zone in a poetic, but certainly not ambivalent manner. The film is most impressive and deserves to be watched by many people.

By Hans Dembowski

Timbuktu was shot in Mauretania, but deals with the Islamist regime imposed on the Malian city of that name by militants for several months in 2012 and 2013, until they were driven away again by Malian and French troops. The screenplay is powerful, and so are the images.

Sissako was born in Mauretania and grew up in Mali. He studied in Soviet-era Moskow and later lived in France for many years. His storytelling is nuanced, and he shies away from simply pitting good versus evil. All the persons he portrays are human beings. They have feelings, they believe in things, but they also harbour doubts. They think and argue with one another. Many of the militants are insecure and confused, and some are incredibly violent. Nonetheless, they are human, as are the people they are suppressing.

The fundamentalist leaders rely on the force of their guns, but are not able to discuss at eye-level with the local Imam who tells them they are wrong. One of them keeps taking cigarette breaks. Smoking is prohibited of course, but his addiction is stronger then his militia's principles.

As the scenes unfold, it becomes obvious just how ridiculous it is to try to prohibit music or football. In one scene, a young woman is whipped in public because she was caught singing – and, in pain, she bursts out in a sung prayer. In another telling scene, young men play imaginary football. They run over the pitch, they wave their arms, one even scores a goal – but there is no ball to be seen.

Film still/Cannes Film Festival/picture-alliance/dpa

The Islamists want to control everything in Timbuktu.

The plot involves many different characters. A non-religious conflict over a cow escalates, someone is killed, and it becomes absolutely clear that the self-appointed religious leaders of the occupied city are simply not up to handling worldly issues of this kind. Without lengthy lectures, Sissako's movie excels in highlighting the arrogance and brutality of the Islamist ideology whilst also depicting its proponents' incompetence in regard to both religious and secular matters.

For good reason, Timbuktu won several Césars, the French equivalent of Hollywood Oscars, in 2015. It does what the arts should do – it doesn't merely entertain, it enlightens. It is also a good example of insiders being better able to tackle sensitive political issues than outsiders. Only someone who understands Mali well can deliver such a convincing portrait of its recent drama.

Had a North American or European director tried to deal with this multi-layered topic, the plot would probably have centred on an aid worker who struggles to come to terms with African reality. That was most disturbingly the case in the "The last king of Scotland", a film that was coproduced by British and US-based companies. Forest Whitaker, the black American actor, won an Oscar for playing the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin, so the film got international praise. It told the story of a young Scottish physician who goes to Uganda to assist the poor and becomes entangled in a brutal regime. Its underlying message was that Africa is a dangerous continent and that naïve do-gooders from Europe cannot do anything about that. It did nothing to help the audience understand the problems of a particular African country.

Sissako's approach is completely different. He assesses African problems from an African perspective. The people he presents are not a mass of poor people, though they are certainly not wealthy by western standards. They are not destitute, however, they have a sense of cultural norms and they lead meaningful lives. What they lack is political and spiritual freedom under Islamist rule.

Sissako is a director who deserves international attention. He deserves attention in Mali too, of course, but as Sissako told the Guardian in an interview in May 2015, his film had not been screened there yet. The reason, he said, was not fear of militants, but lack of cinemas.

Films

Timbuktu, 2014, France/Mauretania, director: Aberrahamane Sissako

The last king of Scotland, 2006, Britain/USA, director: Kevin Macdonald

A girl walks home alone at night

Everything that is illegal in Iran is okay in this movie: substance abuse, western music, prostitution and even a woman being outdoors alone at night. She is actually a chador-wearing vampire on a skate board. Director Ana Lily Amirpour, who belongs to the Iranian community in the USA, has turned everything that marks contemporary Iran upside down. She was free to do so because her "first Iranian vampire movie" was produced in the USA.

By Eva-Maria Verfürth

Anyone who has seen this film will remember the image of the lead character gliding through the streets of "Bad City". Wrapped in her chador, a huge veil, the young hipster vampire spends the pitch-black night roaming the town.

This unusual setting has attracted film critics' attention. The chador is the crucial symbol. It is the politically correct way for women to dress in public in Iran today: a black piece of cloth that is designed to hide the female body entirely. The film was artfully shot in black and white, does not need many words, but relies heavily on music and impressive images.

The screenplay is located in an imaginary Iranian town called Bad City. It is crime ridden. Among the people who live here are Arash, his drug-addicted father and a mysterious young woman. She loves to dance to Farsi pop songs and electronic music at home and turns into a vampire at night, going out to hunt town residents and drink their blood. Arash meets her, but he is not bitten. Slowly at first, a love story begins.

"A girl walks home alone at night" was produced in Farsi, and most roles are played by Iranian actors. The film was shot in California, however, and the music reminds one of American western movies. The scenery is not reminiscent of Iran at all. Amirpour is the daughter of Iranian parents, but has never lived in Iran. She has never said her work has a political message.

Press photo

The vampire haunts Bad City at night.

The movie is a piece of art, and a thought provoking one. Its bewildering mix of pictures and tunes from different cultures challenges conventional ways of seeing things. In Europe and North America, Muslim scarves have become a matter of controversy, and in Iran, the chador symbolises women's suppression, but Amirpour deprives it of all these weighty implications and turns it into what it really is: a black piece of cloth that might serve a vampire perfectly well.

The reviews have been mixed. Some critics say the movie is politically relevant or feminist, while others consider it vacuous. It has been called the "first Iranian vampire western" and "western pop culture in Farsi". Some speak of "great art", while others deny it includes any innovative ideas. All these views make sense, which shows that the film is actually quite exciting.

The lack of an unambiguous political message is perhaps the movie's strongest point. Directors who deal with Iran tend to focus on socio-political issues. Sheila Vand, who plays the vampire, has expressed frustration about Iranian actors in the US tending to only get roles that depict Iranians' problems. Amirpour's approach is different. Anyone so inclined will find political hints and feminist statements, while others can simply enjoy a good arthouse film.

The movie's authenticity is probably related to its roots in the diaspora. Some viewers have complained that its Farsi is marked by American accents and ideas, but that might actually have been intended. In an interview, Amirpour confessed that it was not easy to write the screenplay in Farsi. The way she juxtaposes references to well-known movies is totally new, and seemingly inappropriate ways show that she is a great artist.

Anyone who is interested in an unusual and unexpected expression of the Iranian diaspora's life in the USA should watch "A girl walks home alone at night". In interviews, Amirpour has hinted at identifying with the vampire herself. Her work reflects loneliness and uprootedness, but also a sense of feeling at home in western pop culture. Bad City stands for everything that is forbidden for women in Iran, and it is the place where the vampire girl finds love.

Film

A girl walks home alone at night, 2014, USA, director: Ana Lily Amirpour

Women fight back

You do not expect a film about seven young women getting together for a hen-party on the eve of a wedding to turn out to be a moving political statement concerning equal rights and sexual freedom. But the Indian film "Angry Indian goddesses" is exactly that: a hilarious and entertaining story about seven girls, and, at the same time, a bold and loud outcry against all too common sexual harassment and rape in India.

By Sheila Mysorekar

It starts as a typical Hindi-language "girl movie": six young urban women plus a house maid meet in Goa, on India's west coast, and stay at the holiday home that belongs to one of them. The childhood friends plan to celebrate a weekend of fun and female togetherness, because Frieda, the hostess, will get married. An interesting twist is that she does not tell her friends who the lucky bridegroom is, and viewers are also kept in the dark until later in the film. It would spoil the punch line to give away who Frieda is getting married to, so let's not say more than it comes as a real surprise.

The seven women live very different lives – one of them is an influential businesswoman, one is a musician without commercial success, one is a bored housewife, one is a tough environment activist, one is the house maid of the hostess and so on. They freely talk about all topics of life: love, jobs, men, sex – or the lack of it. They speak about sadness and success. The frankness of the language and easy-going openness about sexual matters are surprising. Viewers feel they are getting to know the women well as they become witnesses of personal secrets, hopes and ambitions.

The little daughter of the stressed-out businesswoman is present too. The silent girl's role becomes decisive in a totally unforeseeable way later in the film. Twists and turns in the plot are frequent and keep the viewer on edge. Nothing is as it first appears.

Laughter and jokes are heard throughout the film, but the story also has very dark and dramatic moments. One involves a gang of rapists brutally attacking one of the women. Her friends' responses show a wrath of a magnitude equalling Kali, the Indian goddess of death and life – hence the title. The movie does not show women as mere victims, but as self-empowered persons who take matters into their own hands.

Excellent acting, camera and editing give the story credibility at every level. The lush tropical landscape of Goa provides an alluring backdrop. In the best Hindi film tradition, music is very important.

Press photo

Angry women posing as Hindu goddess Kali.

The feature film "Angry Indian goddesses" was released in India in December 2015 and has since drawn a lot of attention. Reviews have been excellent and the feedback from audiences positive. The screenplay is an important contribution to the on-going debate on sexual harassment in India. It takes a clear and unequivocal stance against the widespread impunity for rape offenders.

At the Toronto International Film Festival in Canada, "Angry Indian goddesses" came second at the People's Choice Awards, and at the Rome Film Festival in Italy it received the Audience Choice Award. "What we started in a little village of Goa has gone global beyond all our goals," film director Pan Nalin stated, adding that "it is a celebration of Indian womanhood."

The Indian public, however, only gets to see a censored version of the movie. The Central Board of Film Certification ordered many cuts to be made and swear words to be blanked out.

The film is now being released in 50 countries. At the release event in Germany, several actresses were present. They spoke highly of the director Pan Nalin, a man who gave his team "maximum freedom to develop the story line together." The actresses were also very clear on the film's intent to speak out against sexual harassment and rape. At the same time, they took a stance in favour of sexual freedom and legalising homosexuality. "This does not only concern India," said Rajshri Deshpande, one actress. "Rape and sexual harassment are worldwide problems. This needs to be addressed everywhere."

Film

Angry Indian goddesses, 2015, India, director: Pan Nalin

Girl's destiny

Ixcanul is a beautiful film. Not only because of its amazing pictures of the volcanic Guatemalan landscape. And not only because it depicts the exotically traditional lifestyle of the indigenous protagonists with their rituals, which should fascinate many – especially western – viewers. Its particular beauty lies in showing the dignity the Mayan people have in spite of being marginalised, poor and uneducated.

By Katja Dombrowski

Jayro Bustamante, the director, chose the region he grew up in as location for his first feature film. He also recruited the actors locally from the Kaqchikel Mayan community. They all are villagers who previously had no acting experience. He held workshops with the local people to discuss the problems they face. He listened to their life stories, empathising with their experiences and worries. On this basis, Bustamante wrote the screenplay. The plot is fiction, but it is rooted in social reality and assess it from within.

Bustamente's main topic is the role of women as mothers and as victims in this particular society, as he has said in interviews. The story of Ixcanul, which means "volcano" in the Kaqchikel language, is rather sad. It is about the typical fate of millions of girls around the world. María is a beautiful 17-year old Mayan girl who lives and works with her parents on a coffee plantation at the foot of a volcano. She is supposed to marry Ignacio, the overseer. He is a good match who would not only secure María's livelihood, but also raise her parents' status.

María is not eager to marry him however. Ignacio is a widower with three children, much older than María and rather unappealing. There is also Pepe, a plantation worker and still more a boy than a man, she is getting involved with. He is not the love of her life, but he is young and rebellious and thus promises change. Pepe wants to migrate to the USA though and certainly doesn't need a millstone around his neck on that journey.

The idea of joining Pepe and breaking with the traditional life both fascinates and scares María. In this sense, Ixcanul is a coming-of-age story that deals with the teenager's inner struggles, torn between the world she knows and the big wide world behind the volcano. Awakening sexuality plays a role too. María loses her virginity with Pepe – mainly in order to tie him to herself. Her plan does not work out though. When María finally decides to go with Pepe, it is too late, because he has already left without telling her. María stays behind pregnant. She is in big trouble, and so are her parents.

Juana, the mother, tries to take care of the situation using traditional Mayan practices – with no success. Several abortion attempts fail, and Juana concludes that the baby is meant to live. However, a dramatic situation evolves in which tradition clashes with modernity. After a snake bite, white doctors in hospital save María's life, but take her baby away. They make the family believe that the baby did not survive the medical intervention. Child trafficking used to be a major problem in Guatemala, and most victims were indigenous people.

In the end, María marries Ignacio. She does not manage to escape her destiny. She has lost both her child and her lover who promised change. The viewer is not left with much hope for María's life. But is she really without power? She feels like the volcano. Outside there is stone, but inside there is fire. One day, she may erupt. Even if María sees no choice now and is playing her role, she may find a way to make a difference in her daughters' lives.

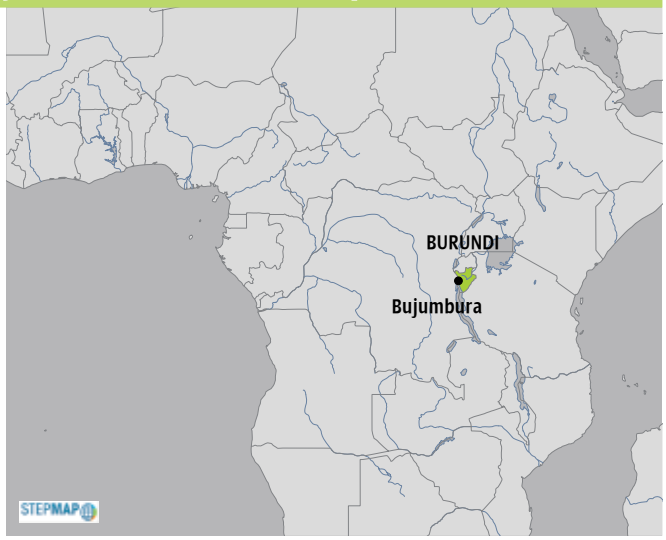
Press photo

María is getting ready for marriage.

Film

Ixcanul (volcano), 2015, Guatemala/France, director: Jayro Bustamante

Nowadays: Split country, hushed-up media



Since the failed military coup on 14 May 2015, the media is being restricted in Burundi, and independent-minded journalists are hunted down. Men in police uniforms have burned down the buildings of four independent media which the government accused of being involved in the coup. Journalists were tortured and killed, hundreds have fled the country. Exiled journalists are now expressing criticism from beyond the borders, mostly from Rwanda.

In April 2015, the ruling party CNDD-FDD announced that incumbent President Pierre Nkurunziza would run for office again after 10 years in power. The Burundian constitution limits its terms to two. After the announcement, people of different political persuasions took to the streets in protest, with young people leading peaceful rallies in Bujumbura, the capital. Then presidential guards fired live rounds on them. Some in the security forces decided to overthrow Nkurunziza, but their coup failed. The ensuing violence forced many people into exile.

Journalists remaining in the country are now working in constant fear and practice self-censorship on matters involving the security forces. A presidential spokesman has claimed that journalists can freely exercise their profession, but Marie-Soleil Frère, media expert on Central Africa, disagrees: "After the coup attempt, the people of Burundi are denied access to independent and pluralistic information," she says. Intellectuals are the main target of suppression.

Journalist Jean Ndayisaba says that repression affects all citizens, including those whom journalists interview. "A man told me that he knows who is the murderer of his family members, but he refused to name the perpetrators, fearing for his own safety." According to Ndayisaba, government employees can't speak freely either. In general, people are afraid to speak about human-rights violations.

The situation is different for the Burundian journalists in exile. They are free to report on the current situation, and they disseminate reports on the government's violation of human rights on social networks. They provide a forum for people whose relatives have been abducted, tortured or killed to speak out.

"We are far away and therefore free to speak. It displeases the government in Bujumbura, but this is our strength," says Valéry Muco of Inzamba, a radio programme produced in Rwanda's capital Kigali. He says that Burundi's media has been blacked out since May 2015. "Here abroad, we are guided by journalistic ethics," he says.

In our column "Nowadays", D+C/E+Z correspondents write about daily life in developing countries.

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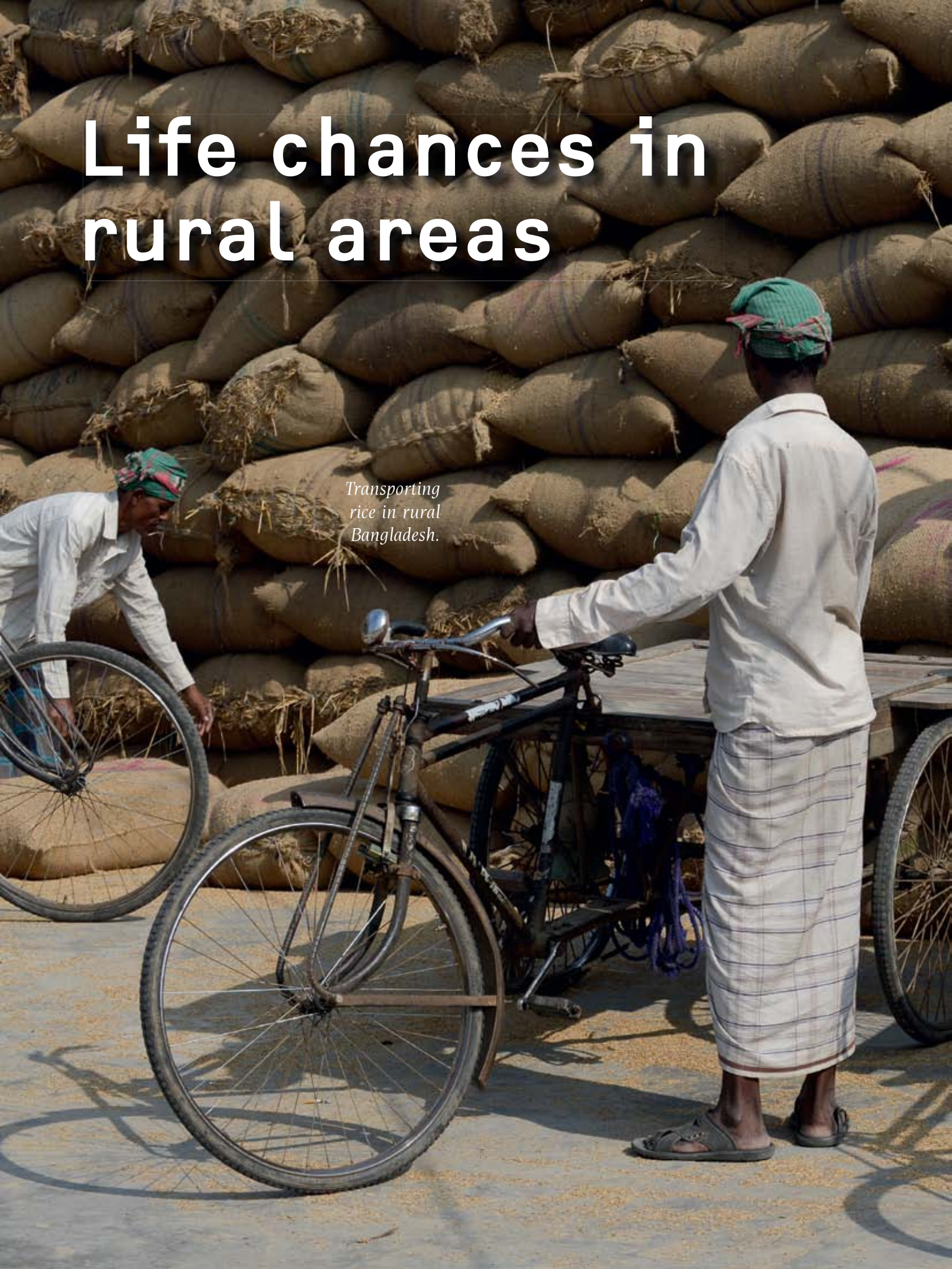
Life chances in rural areas



Transporting rice in rural Bangladesh.

Bothling/Photography

The quality of rural living depends on all kinds of infrastructure – from roads and water supply to schools and health care. People require information to make prudent choices and take their fate into their own hands. Typically, agriculture is the most important industry in rural areas, and the more it thrives and generates income, the more the local purchasing power grows, so new business opportunities arise. For that to happen, infrastructure development must serve agriculture and enable rural people to grasp whatever chances arise. A virtuous cycle of development can set in. It can help overcome outdated traditions and foster lasting peace.

Saving our heritage

Culture and tradition play a big role in the development of any community. This is especially true of marginalised rural communities such as India's Adivasi tribes. Boro Baski, who belongs to the Santals, who live in eastern India and Bangladesh, assesses the matter.

By Boro Baski

In November 2015, the Universities of Oslo and Tromsø organised an important symposium. The title was "Belief, Scholarship and Cultural Heritage: Paul Olaf Bodding and the making of a Scandinavian-Santal legacy". Bodding was a Lutheran missionary from Norway who worked among the Santal tribes in what is now the Indian state of Jharkhand from 1890 to 1934.

Bodding wrote down hundreds of Santal folk tales and songs, worked on a Santali dictionary and prepared a large body of religious literature in Santali. Moreover, Bodding collected more than 3000 ethnographic items of Santal people. These items are now preserved in Norway, Denmark and the USA. Many of them are in the University of Oslo's Museum of Cultural History.

Visiting the village museum.

Baski

It is also true, however, that Christian missionaries in the 19th and early 20th century generally did not appreciate Santal culture. To the extent that they converted tribal people to their faith, they tried to uproot the cultural heritage (see box, p. 15). Accordingly, it is no coincidence that the artifacts Bodding gathered are now in Europe and America. That it is valued is important however. International appreciation of our culture and international support for protecting our heritage is most welcome.

Participants in the symposium last year included scholars, social activists, staff from government agencies including the embassies of France, Denmark and Japan as well as representatives from Santal villages in India and Bangladesh. I attended on behalf of our community-based organisation which works in Ghosaldanga and Bishnubati, two Santal villages in West Bengal. With support from the famous Indian Museum in Kolkata, we have managed to establish our own rural Museum of Santal Culture.

Our own museum

We Santals have no history that was written by ourselves. The memories that exist have come down to us from our ancestors through oral traditions. Myths, songs, folk tales, dances et cetera are important in this context.

The written history of tribal people tends to be the work of the dominant groups in society. In mainstream schools, our children learn about the lives of the great personalities and rulers of our country, but our history is not reflected. We need to know about our own heroes and heroines however. It boosts self-respect and self-confidence to grow up with an understanding of one's own people's talents and genius. Therefore, we decided to build a museum dedicated to Santal history and culture in our village.

At first, the villagers – and even some educated Santals – were sceptical about the idea. Some said the "backwardness" of Santal life should not be celebrated. We explained to everyone that it makes sense to put on display things like the musical instruments,

ornaments and tools that our ancestors used. These items tell us about our past and the ingenious spirit, intelligence and deep thinking of our ancestors. We are not glorifying outdated artifacts but showing what life used to be like.

The idea is to educate our children about our rich culture and tradition because the strength of our cultural roots can give them support in the modern world. We do not want to abandon the Santal mentality while we move forward and adapt to a changing world.

The museum was built by the community and is maintained by it. All families contribute to the work. Most items were donated by Santal families from various villages in West Bengal, but some more expensive articles like ornaments had to be bought.

Eight years after it was started, we can tell that our museum is strengthening the cultural confidence of our community. Moreover, it has become an information centre for neighbours from other villages. It is encouraging to witness their interest in our culture.

India's formal education system nurtures middle-class aspirations with little regard for the nation's diverse communities and bridging the gaps between them. It is difficult and often painful to make the transition from tradition to modernity. We certainly must adapt, but government institutions are not helping. We must find our own way.

Unless we save our heritage, it will be lost. Adivasis are marginalised in India, but our children must not grow up thinking that our culture is somehow inferior. The museum helps them to understand their roots, and so does our own non-governmental school (see D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2016/06, p. 36 f.).

Uprooted individuals

Exposure to other ways of life matters too, no doubt. After finishing school, many youngsters from our village go to work in other places, sometimes in other Indian states. We know from experience that they stay confidently connected to the Santal community and our

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Lost in translation

Two years ago, I contributed an interview with a renowned Santal writer, Dhirendrath Baskey, to a documentary film. We met in Bhimpur, a village where American Baptists came to work among our Adivasi tribe as early as 1860. I found it depressing that I could not find a single other elderly Santal man who could tell me about Baskey's lifetime in our language. In Bhimpur, a place of great relevance in Santal history, the people today show no pride in our culture – and perhaps even worse, they know little about it.

This is the dark side of missionary activities. The Christian missionaries prohibited Santal culture, especially dance and music, so the tribal people who grew up in their environment got a modern education but were deprived of affinities to their own traditions and values.

Things were no different at the Mulpahari mission until the late 20th century. That is where the Norwegian missionary Paul Olaf Bodding worked. He is remembered today for documenting Santal culture (see main essay). On the other hand, Ruby Hembrom, a Santal intellectual and publisher, told me that her father was forced to leave the mission because, as a teacher, he had staged a cultural programme that included the use of Santal drums. Due to that rigid stance, a great cultural gap opened up between Christian and non-Christian Santals.

In the past few decades, however, missionaries have become more appreciative of tribal culture. Especially the Jesuit and Salesian orders of the Roman Catholic Church understand that it is important to empower tribal youth by relying on Santal traditions, including songs, dance and theatre. The Johar Human Resources Development Centre in Dumka, Jharkand, and the Santal Museum at the Don Bosco School in Azimganj, West Bengal, are doing good work.

The truth is that Bodding actually planted the seed for saving Santal heritage more than a hundred years ago. His appreciation of the Santals and their culture spread far and wide. Personally, I found it fascinating to meet two Norwegian ladies, Nora Irene Stronstad Hope and Gunvor Fjordholm Holvik, at a university event in Oslo last year. They are the descendants of missionaries and were born at Benagoria and grew up at Chandrapura Mission.

Speaking good Santali, Stronstad told me: "We still live in two different worlds." Both women have fond memories of growing up in the Santal village with its clean mud houses in the midst of Shal trees and ample freedom of playing and roaming around with Santal kids of their age (note essay on Santal youth in D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2015/07, p. 21 f., and D+C/E+Z print edition 2015/6-8, p. 32 ff.). The second world is Norway, where they now live with their families. Stronstad said: "We share with them our experiences but it is hard for them to realise what we feel." She finds news about forest depletion, environmental destruction and other hardships in India painful. We will stay in touch – and thanks to modern technology, that is not difficult.

It is encouraging that there is empathy with our fate in Norway and that a deep affinity to our culture is being felt there. This is a good start for further cooperation, and it can help to bridge the gap between Christian and non-Christian Santals. At the same time, it is depressing to know that, unlike two elderly ladies in Scandinavia, many members of our community in India are no longer able to speak our language.

culture. On the contrary, young Santals who grew up in urban hostels and did not learn our language well, tend to feel alienated in the later stages of their life.

That is equally true of most of the educated Santals who live in urban areas. Many of them express a deep yearning to identify culturally on blogs and social media.

That yearning sometimes proves harmful, for example when people romanticise our culture or even radicalise it for political purposes. Neither approach helps our community to rise to challenges we face today. That is why we believe that it is better to be in touch with one's heritage right from the start. Unlike the members of India's privileged castes, Santals cannot take that for granted.

Baski

A traditional Santal string instrument.

Marriage instead of graduation

Bangladesh has improved school enrolment with spectacular success in the past 25 years, and today, girls are more likely to go to school than boys. Even in rural areas, schools are now mostly within commuting distance. As in many other parts of the world, however, drop-out rates remain a worry in Bangladesh, and the quality of government-run schools tends to be poor. New policies are needed to help girls complete secondary school.

In Bangladesh in 2010, 97 % of the girls aged six to 10 went to primary school, according to official statistics, and so did 92 % of the boys. Moreover, the government data indicate that 55 % of girls aged 11 to 15 were enrolled in secondary schools, as were 45 % of boys.

Government data are sometimes distorted, but the general trend in Bangladesh is undisputed. We contributed to a nationwide study on "Women's life choices and attitudes" (WiLCAS) in 2014. Our survey relied on information provided by mothers rather than on data provided by schools. According to our assessment, the girls' net enrolment rates were 83 % in primary education and 58 % in secondary education in 2014. The respective shares for boys were 81 % and 47 %. These figures are less impressive than the government statistics, but are nonetheless very good given that Bangladesh is a very poor country. Only two decades ago, girls' enrolment was lower than boys. Nobel laureate Amartya Sen has repeatedly stressed that India and other countries should learn from Bangladesh's educational success.

That said, the risk of dropping out of school remains considerable. Our estimate is that 32 % of the boys and 24 % of the girls who went to primary school in 2010 had stopped going to (secondary) school by 2014. Apparently, the risk of dropping out increases with the girls' age. According to our sample, more than half of the girls left school for "marriage-related reasons". That was the case for only one fifth of the male drop-outs.

In previous decades, early marriage was even more likely to disrupt women's education. The WiLCAS data show that almost two thirds of all drop-outs among the mothers surveyed had quit school because they got married.

It is telling, moreover, that "household poverty" is the second most important reason for leaving school today. It means that families cannot afford school-related expenses. This trend is not unusual. According to a study published by UNESCO and UNICEF (2015), "in many countries, low-income households cannot afford the direct costs of sending their children to school (for instance for fees, uniforms or books) or the indirect costs resulting from the lost wages or household contributions of their sons and daughters."

In Bangladesh, the trend is nonetheless puzzling because the government has been promoting girls' enrolment in schools since the 1990s and has lowered the costs of school attendance in several ways. Moreover, income poverty has been declining. Most likely, the reference to household poverty actually indicates a still prevalent anti-girl bias at the household level.

It is useful to consider what households spend on children's schooling. At the primary level, total educational expenditure for boys and girls is almost equal. In fact, slightly more is spent on girls, though

spending on private-tuition is slightly higher for boys. The expenditure for boys in secondary schools exceeds that for girls by 27 % however, and families invest 38 % more in boys' private tuition at that level.

It is a sad truth that private tuition is becoming increasingly important even in rural areas. This trend is evident across South Asia (see D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2016/06, p. 36 f., and e-Paper 2016/02, p. 11). The main reason is the dismal quality of state-run schools. According to an independent assessment of student learning in rural Bangladesh by Asadullah and Chaudhury (2015), there is a weak relationship between learning outcomes and years spent in schools.

Our data indicate that Bangladeshi parents value the education of their sons and daughters equally as far as primary schooling is concerned. However, there is a serious gender gap in secondary schooling, even though that is not evident in the enrolment figures. Families invest less in girls' education, though they send them to school. Girls' chances of actually obtaining the standard school certificate after class 10 are smaller than those of boys.

Most likely, the expectation of early marriage is the primary factor behind the gender disparity in household expenditures. If the norm is that adolescent girls marry instead of finishing school, investing in their education becomes a luxury impoverished parents cannot afford. That they are expected to pay a substantial dowry when their daughter gets married is a further disincentive to investing in education. In turn, this means that households are too poor to invest in girls' education.

The good news is that traditional factors such as the lack of schools within commuting distance and religious opposition to female schooling are no longer holding back Bangladeshi girls. The bad news is that girls still lack equal opportunities in education. What the country now needs is a new policy to help girls finish secondary school.

Sumon Yusuf/Majority World/Lineair

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For girls, primary school attendance has become the norm.

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Unblocking investments

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The UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are meant to bring about a world without hunger, and their aspirations are realistic. Business as usual, however, will not do. Words must be followed up with action, especially in rural areas. That is where three quarters of the world's poor and hungry people live.

We must prepare rural regions for the future – not only in order to eradicate hunger, but just as much to achieve the other SDGs. We must ensure that people have prospects.

Strong rural infrastructure is of the essence. Rural areas all over the world are undergoing structural change at various speeds. Human labour in the agriculture and food sectors is becoming more productive due to capital investments and enhanced knowledge. Innovation has become the most important driving force. Policymakers should support this trend – and make use of it by gearing structural change to sustainability and social equity.

Ultimately, change is driven by the investment decisions of millions and millions of individuals – consider smallholder farmers, input providers and merchants, for instance, or food processors, the providers of financial services and many others. The speed and impact of their investments, however, depend on the business environment that policymakers and public administrations bring about.

Research shows that public expenditure on infrastructure matters. Relevant issues include electrification, roads, telecommunication, rail and port facilities, irrigation, smallholder-oriented agricultural research and development, but also farmer education, extension services, schools, health stations, drinking-water supply and sanitation. They all boost competitiveness at the local level and help smallholders to profit from agricultural value chains. Most often, government initiatives are needed, but prudent regulation can facilitate meaningful infrastructure contributions from private-sector companies too.

The fundamental challenge is to create conditions that are conducive to job generation in rural areas. This is especially true in Africa, a continent that is not well placed in the global economy to create jobs in manufacturing. The core issue is to invest in sectors according to a region's specific potentials. For obvious reasons, it makes sense to foster development in agriculture and food processing, whilst also supporting related sectors that either provide inputs or purchase products.

Once agriculture and food businesses begin to thrive, additional incomes are generated. This money will stimulate local demand for building materials, clothes, transport opportunities, service providers et cetera, leading to yet more employment. This is how endogenous, sustainable development is triggered at the rural level.

Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is convinced that a broad-based, holistic approach is needed to overcome hunger and malnutrition. Accordingly, it is supporting the growth of agriculture, the backbone of rural development. At the same time, the BMZ is investing in many sectors that are linked to farming, including physical and social infrastructure, services and sustainable resource management.

The BMZ has substantially boosted its efforts in the past two years in the context of its One World No Hunger initiative. It is now involved in matters of strategic relevance that were previously neglected, including the promotion of innovations in agriculture and food sectors, taking cross-cutting approaches to food security and protecting the quality of soils. We have agreed joint programmes on food security and rural development with 15 partner countries. The BMZ is investing an annual € 1.5 billion. Together with its partners it wants to unblock investments and promote science-based, modern approaches in agriculture and food industries, for example, by establishing green innovation centres.

Without transport options, Mali could not export cotton.

Böthling/Photography

Long distances

People's incomes have to rise for food security to improve and poverty to go down in rural Africa. Susanne Neubert of the Berlin-based Centre for Rural Development (Seminar für ländliche Entwicklung – SLE) argued in an interview with Hans Dembowski that farms' productivity must get a boost and that better transport opportunities are among the requirements that matter most in this context.

Interview with Susanne Neubert

What kind of infrastructure is needed to kick-start agriculture development in Africa?
It has been said often, and it is true: rural roads are essential. The highways mostly tend to be okay these days, but they neither reach the villages nor the fields. In the lack of feeder roads and bridges, many people remain cut off from their country's social and economic life. This is especially so in the rainy season. People cannot market their goods, and they cannot provide machines or inputs for their farms. To do so, they'd need roads and access to vehicles. If they cannot get to markets, they cannot mechanise farm work. And if they do mechanise, they'll need spare parts sooner or later. Transport opportunities are needed to boost productivity. So long as people basically rely on hoes, the scope for more intensive farming is limited. Hoes mean very hard work on rather small plots. African farmers don't need complex, digitised machines of the kind that European farmers use, but comparatively simple and robust machines as are manufactured in Asia and can be used by cooperatives would be helpful.

Isn't oxen ploughing an option?
Yes, it is in theory, and many attempts were made to introduce it. However, the oxenisation of African agriculture failed in many places, not least because veterinarian services became overstretched when governments cut their budgets in the course of structural adjustment. Properly trained oxen are quite expensive, and if such an animal dies, the viability of the entire farm is in peril. For oxen to be used systematically throughout a region, reliable veterinarian services are indispensable. Oxen health is endangered in many ways in sub-Saharan countries.

What about water and power supply? Aren't these things policymaker should take care of?
Well, everything needs to be taken care of in rural areas. But it is a huge challenge to develop all kinds of infrastructure at once. So far, that has not proved possible, and it would certainly cost a lot of money. Setting up a power grid is very expensive, plus it only makes sense if you charge fees from users. But how are people going to earn the money to pay their electricity bills unless they have sufficient farm revenues? That's why the core issue is to boost farm revenues. It is not an option to let all rural people depend on welfare. As for large-scale water infrastructure, most irrigation projects have failed too. Small-scale irrigation in horticulture – the cultivation of fruits and vegetables – is often successful. But where that is the case, you'll again need transport facilities to get the produce to the market. We know only too well that much food rots along the wayside.

It seems that rural development is still basically agriculture development.
Yes, that is the way it is. Agriculture is rural areas' economic backbone. In that regard, nothing has changed over the decades. Since food prices began to rise in 2008, investments in agriculture have begun to make economic sense once more. Urban food demand is considerable – and it is growing. Accordingly, attention has been focussing on agriculture development again. There was a lot of talk about integrated rural development in the 1970s and later. The idea was to take a holistic approach, not only to expand agriculture, but to build health services and education facilities, processing industries, all manner of infrastructure and so on at once. Unfortunately, it did not work out.

What was the reason?
It is very difficult to set systemic or horizontal change in all sectors in motion at the same time. It is much easier to define a single goal and achieve it. Consider HIV/AIDS for example. It is much easier to reduce infection rates and improve the supply of anti-retroviral drugs than to establish a comprehensive health-care system. You define target groups, and you only need to take a certain number of measures. Otherwise, you'd have to figure out who will pay for what, and who may get what kind of service free of charge. In other words, you start building institutions. The trouble is that poor rural people cannot pay. They simply do not have enough money. For a comprehensive health-care system to operate properly, you'd have to ensure that other things work out as well, including the generation of agricultural incomes, production, marketing and so on. Governments normally do not manage to get all these things done

at once, and budget constraints make matters especially tough in developing countries.

So policymakers should focus on boosting farm productivity?
Well, doing so certainly makes sense for a number of reasons. The result is not only more food, but more income as well. Both is needed, and urgently so. Higher rural incomes will help to drive development in other sectors – education, health care et cetera. On the other hand, migration to the urban areas will accelerate unless rural incomes rise, but African agglomerations are overburdened anyway. They plainly do not offer the employment opportunities needed. According to surveys, a very high percentage of Africans would like to live in Europe, and this is more than understandable – since many of them live at the threshold of survival. To alleviate pressures, we need to boost farm productivity in environmentally sustainable and socially inclusive ways.

Who can promote that cause?
Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is taking a sensible approach. Its special initiative One World Without Hunger is the right approach. Its focus is on innovation centres, with an emphasis on education and extension services in the crucial sector of agriculture. Thomas Piketty, the prominent French economist, has shown that education has always been the main trigger of meaningful progress. The BMZ is investing a lot of money in this matter every year. Germany's international-development agencies cannot enforce anything in a foreign country, but they can support worthy efforts. It is essential to boost and further develop knowledge at the local level. Unfortunately, agricultural colleges in Africa are often theory-driven, not solution-oriented. All too often, they show little concern for African farming, but basically reiterate text-book knowledge from Europe and North America. Farmers require competent advice that fits their needs, however, and they deserve to get information on how to boost productivity in sustainable and affordable ways.

Could Africa benefit from Asia's experience?
That is easier said than done. It is true that Asian countries have made much greater progress in terms of agriculture development than African ones. One reason was that their staple food is rice. High yielding varieties of this crop were bred, and for instance Southeast Asia had the labour force and water resources to use them. Cultivated the right way, paddy rice does not necessarily require mineral fertilisers or pesticides. The yields are fine without such input. Moreover, paddy rice is self-compatible, so farmers could keep cultivating rice without having to buy seed. There were some downsides too, of course, but all summed up, international agriculture-breeding programmes proved quite useful. In Africa, rice is becoming more important now, but this continent does not have water resources and a labour force per hectare to equal Southeast Asia. Moreover, researchers neglected Africa's traditional crops like millet, sorghum and cassava in their breeding programmes. Maize has now become the staple crop in many areas, but it cannot be cultivated as easily and sustainably as paddy rice. Asian countries, moreover, have another advantage which is often underestimated: they are densely populated. Overpopulation is often considered a huge problem, even though population density actually facilitates business activity, allowing for marketing effectiveness and scaling up. That is no different in densely populated African

dem

Tractor on the slopes of Mount Kilimanjaro: rural roads must improve.

Sprague/Lineair

Zambian farmers: "hoes mean very hard work on rather small plots."

regions, consider parts of Kenya for example. Low population density, however, implies long distances, so it becomes harder to bring about development.

It would certainly help if farmers were better organised in order for them to market goods together or share machine pools. Cooperatives and capacity building could make the difference. Should governments or civil-society agencies promote this cause?

In rural Africa, it normally does not make sense to try to distinguish the state from civil society. The reason is that government agencies tend to be weak. Leaders' authority mostly arises from tradition and religion at the grassroots level. I agree that it is necessary to organise smallholder farms more effectively so they can join forces in production and marketing and achieve the kind of economies of scale that normally only benefit big players. But once more, this is easier said than done. Due to failed attempts in the past, all new attempts to build unions and cooperatives meet with considerable distrust today. Organising farmers is a core issue, but a most challenging one too. You have to build on what is already there and avoid risks of corruption at the same time. The approach must be intelligent and participatory. Progress on this front is essential for rural development.

Would support for individual farmers be feasible?

Well, e-vouchers are a promising approach. Governments can grant such vouchers via mobile phones, and they allow farmers to procure the input they need, including fertilisers for example. One problem, however, is that these things are not available everywhere. Private companies will have to expand their outreach, and small-scale traders can make a difference at the local level. They are sure to do that once the purchasing power is adequate and the necessary infrastructure is in place. Once again, rural feeder roads matter. The conventional systems of farm subsidies, however, are dysfunctional. Typically, governments procure huge volumes of fertiliser and ship it to rural areas, but many farmers do not get it in time or perhaps never at all. All too often, it is the wrong kind of fertiliser. The typical African government invests too small a share of its budget in agriculture, and what it does spend is squandered on subsidies that do not really help. Some middlemen and all kinds of dubious agencies make profits, but the smallholder farms are not advancing.

Perhaps the subsidies should simply be slashed?

No, that would not be okay either. Smallholders and subsistence farmers really need support, and e-vouchers make sense. They can be used in a targeted manner, especially as mobile phone networks are operational almost everywhere. Subsidies can take many forms moreover. Zambia, for example, has introduced e-vouchers for storing cereal so smallholders can wait for seasonal prices to rise before they sell their harvest. They earn more money this way. One thing is obvious, however: none of this works out where transportation options are lacking. Roads and access to vehicles are indeed crucial. ←

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Cured but not in good shape

It will still take a long time for Sierra Leone to overcome the impacts of the Ebola epidemic. The outbreak of the disease was only possible due to the region's social and economic situation, which result from policy-making. Decades of marginalisation and social inequality are major issues that need to be addressed. Doing so needs to be a top priority for restoring stability to all countries affected. The global dimensions are that brain drain in the medical professions must be stemmed, and rich nations must contribute to funding health care in the world's least developed regions.

By Anne Jung

West Africa presented optimal conditions for the spread of the Ebola virus in 2014. The health-care systems of the three countries worst affected – Guinea (Conakry), Liberia and Sierra Leone – are among the weakest in the world. Ebola swept relentlessly across the region. Ten thousand people were infected in Sierra Leone alone, and nearly 4,000 people died. Altogether, the epidemic claimed more than 11,000 lives.

Even today, the death of so many relatives and friends casts a pall of sorrow over Sierra Leone. Moreover, the fear that the disease could return is still being felt, and so is the sense of helplessness at having been abandoned by the government and international community. At the same time, people's pride in having beaten Ebola in collective action is also evident. They know full well, however, that poor health-care infrastructure left them no alternative. A professionally run and adequately equipped health-care system would have nipped the Ebola crisis in the bud.

"Do or die." This was the laconic response to the question of what motivated thousands of community workers, many of whom received only minimal remuneration for their efforts. They spent months going from door to door, informing people about risks and how to protect oneself. Many of them became infected themselves and even died because of the poor standard of equipment at health facilities. The community is proud of everyone who helped the sick and fought the virus "on the front line".

People saw their actions as self-empowerment. At the same time, they were acutely aware of the absence of the state agencies and the government's failure to build effective health-care and education infrastructure, especially in rural areas . For decades, successive Sierra Leone governments have failed to establish a public health system worthy of the term.

Social leveller

During the epidemic, there was less tolerance for rule-bending and corruption that otherwise mark daily life in Sierra Leone. The political leadership was not, as it normally is, above the law. Sierra Leoneans were astonished when Vice President Samuel Sam-Sumana was quarantined for 21 days after one of his bodyguards died of Ebola. They were equally surprised when a high-ranking minister was stopped at a roadblock and forced to observe the travel restrictions imposed across the country. Indeed, the rules

Many community workers in Sierra Leone put themselves at risk in the fight against Ebola.

AP Photo/picture-alliance

that were put in place to stem the disease applied to everyone. Ebola became a social leveller.

Today, existential fears overshadow the relief that the epidemic is over and freedom of movement has returned. "No one at present can say for sure how the virus will develop in the bodies of those who survived," says Archchun Ariyarajah of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Freetown. Survivors have to cope with all sorts of symptoms on a daily basis, and many symptoms are delayed, ranging from awful joint pain to severely impaired vision and depressive moods. This state of affairs has an impact on households and society as the loss of a breadwinner, even temporarily, may plunge entire families into destitution.

The acute poverty in which the people live makes healing twice as hard as it would be anyway. "We were very poor even before the epidemic. While it lasted, we couldn't cultivate our fields because we were quarantined. We lost the harvest and couldn't build reserves," says Musa Koroma. His eyes are red, his athletic body is crippled by pain, and he has lost everything he once owned: "After we were taken to the Ebola centre, everything was burned as a security measure. We face ruin, like those who returned home after the civil war." Decades of brutal strife only ended in 2002.

According to its recently published post-Ebola strategy, the government is contemplating to provide Ebola survivors with free health care. But such a promise will not help much in the short term given that most people have no health facilities within their reach.

Many survivors' suffering is compounded by the fact that they are ostracised and treated with mistrust by those around them. In some places, they are held responsible for the whole calamity and cannot return home. "Even relatives react with hostility, because, even after having coped with extreme poverty for decades, many simply don't know how to find the means to survive," says Abu Brima of Network Movement for Justice and Development (NMJD), a human-rights organisation. He wants all anti-stigmatisation measures to be community based, so responsibility is shared, and survivors are not isolated. After the war, segregation proved counter-productive, when the

Boom and bust

Extractive industries have not improved living conditions for the majority of people: a diamond mine in eastern Sierra Leone.

Graben/Lineair

Due to its fertile soil and abundant resources, Sierra Leone is actually a rich country, where better living, housing and working conditions could easily be achieved for the vast majority of people. However, diamond, rutile, gold and other mining activities have only served the interests of a small elite. The agreements concluded between the government and private-sector companies have largely freed the latter from any sense of social responsibility. Results include massive exploitation, environmental damage, expropriations and evictions.

By granting tax breaks to the mining companies and selling large tracts of land, the government has deprived itself of strong sources of revenue and thus undermined its own ability to ensure universal access to health care and education. In 2012, the tax incentives for mining companies were 15 times greater than the budgets for health care and education (Natural Resource Watch 2014). Land grabs plunge herders, small farmers, fishermen, agricultural workers and nomads into poverty by denying them vital access to land and water.

In recent years, Sierra Leone has experienced a huge economic boom, fuelled significantly by revenues from the extractive sector. Even though many in the country have profited from the improvements in transport infrastructure and power supply, the standard of living is still as precarious for the majority of the people as it was in the time after the civil war. State institutions have not strengthened in the course of the economic boom, and corruption – the abuse of public office for private gains – has become worse.

In 2013, the country's gross domestic product grew by a hefty 20 %. Because of the Ebola epidemic and a global fall in commodity prices, it shrank by the same rate in 2015. Other countries' response to the health crises compounded that economic disaster. "The countries affected by Ebola were forced into total economic and political isolation," says Laurie Garrett, a science journalist. Because of the Ebola outbreak, 40 countries unilaterally imposed travel restrictions in spite of a categorical recommendation of the World Health Organization (WHO) not to do so. British Airways stopped flights to the region, and other airlines followed suit. These measures breached the binding WHO rules on trade and travel in the event of an epidemic and made the work of the aid agencies much more difficult. Regional and international trade relations collapsed, in some places food prices doubled. Sierra Leone's extractive sector, which was already hurt by low iron ore prices, went into free fall.

Source

Natural Resource Watch: Report on Sierra Leone. *http://ibissierraleone.org/sites/default/files/media/pdf_global/sierra_leone_pdf/sierra_leone_nrw_final.pdf*

wounded – especially those who had been savagely mutilated – were accommodated in separate camps.

Redistributing resources for health care

Where will the money for development come from? To generate more government revenue, it is important to diversify the economy, promote small-scale farming and establish manufacturing industries. At present, not a single one of the three Ebola-affected countries can possibly fund a proper health-care system on its own. External donor funding is essential, and it must be monitored independently.

The recently published Panama Papers give an idea of the kind of money that could be made available to post-Ebola countries. Closing tax havens would significantly boost government revenues and – even more important perhaps – restore confidence in government capacities. The lack of such confidence made fighting Ebola much harder.

The call for financial support for health care is based on more than only the Ebola crisis however. An international financing mechanism should compel all sufficiently prosperous countries to contribute to poorer countries' welfare-state social budgets. The principle of solidarity has long been practised at national levels, and it must be extended to the global context. Humanity does not lack the resources to provide full-fledged health care to all people in all countries. The truth is that the rich countries are refusing to share existing resources in a fair and equitable manner.

Preventing medical migration

Sierra Leone has about 7 million people and employs fewer than 300 doctors. Around three times that number work at Frankfurt's University Hospital alone. In the wake of the Ebola epidemic, health-care provision contracted even more. The number of malaria deaths doubled, maternal mortality began to rise again, and measles spread. Similar developments were observed in the neighbouring countries too.

Patients almost always have to pay personally for treatment at a health centre or hospital, even though mother and child health-care programmes are officially free of charge. It was the lack of public health-care infrastructure that allowed the Ebola outbreak to become an epidemic. Unless an effective health-care infrastructure is built and well-trained professionals are made available, there can be no effective disease control in the future, warns Albrecht Jahn of Heidelberg University. The problem is that only 10 % of the doctors trained in Sierra Leone stay in the country after graduation. The vast majority emigrate in search of acceptable salaries, and many are poached by health institutions based in prosperous nations.

AP Photo/picture-alliance

Awareness raising in Freetown, Sierra Leone.

One of the first steps for effective preventive action should therefore be a reduction of the brain drain in the health-care sector. It could be achieved by introducing a binding international code of conduct for the recruitment of health-care professionals. Moreover, according to Shecku Mansery of the aid organisation SLADEA, which organised Ebola aid for the churches, "the government finally needs to meet its responsibility by raising salaries in health and education to a level that encourages professionals to stay in the country."

Key factors in stemming the epidemic included involvement of local communities, reliance on their specific expertise and development of the necessary empathy. Strengthened by that experience, communities now expect the health-care system to improve fundamentally. Moreover, participants in the first post-Ebola conference in Freetown earlier this year called for healthier living and working conditions.

The next step in a policy aimed at meeting people's needs would be to reform the constitution. Such changes are demanded by non-governmental organisations such as the Civil Society Forum in Sierra Leone. They want to see the right to education and the right to health enshrined in the constitution. Experience in South Africa, for example, shows that it makes a difference when the government can be sued for breaching the constitution. "Access to quality education and health care is the prime requirement for curbing the power and despotism of the state," says Abu Brima, director of the NMJD. ←

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Radio Wa is talking health

Boosting health care in rural areas is a serious challenge. Involving local radio stations can help. In northern Uganda, a local FM station supports the fight against leprosy.

By Olaf Hirschmann and Herman Joseph Kawuma

Most people in Uganda, including health professionals, think leprosy is extinct, an ancient disease from biblical times. They are wrong. From 2008 to 2012, 1500 new cases were diagnosed, and two thirds were reported in the country's comparatively poor north, a region with a very low population density that is traumatised by 20 years of war inflicted by a militia called the Lord's Resistance Army. It also has the comparatively high prevalence of tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS.

Over 100 years after the mycobacterium leprae was first identified, leprosy is still prevalent in many countries, and the ways of transmission are still not understood. The disease affects skin and nerves. Nerve damage leads to the characteristic loss of sensibility, first affecting the extremities and later causing the loss of fingers and toes. Even facial features can be disfigured as the illness progresses.

Leprosy can be cured with simple antibiotics that do not cost much. The therapy takes six to twelve months. If the loss of limbs is to be prevented, however, the disease must be diagnosed and treated early on.

This is the way to prevent lifelong suffering. Depressingly, however, many patients spend years going from one quack healer to the next incompetent health provider, until the destruction of limbs becomes too obvious to miss the diagnosis. Even many scientifically-trained health workers fail to identify the disease when they see the skin patches. Therefore, information and awareness raising are paramount in the fight against this age-old disease.

The main challenges of leprosy control are:

- a lack of community awareness,
- delays in the diagnosis,
- the hidden and growing presence of leprosy in so called 'hot spots',
- the diminishing knowledge and skills of health workers and
- patients dropping out from treatment regimes.

To ensure impact, the Talking Health programme, which was designed to tackle leprosy in eight northern Ugandan districts, involved a local radio station. It was run from March 2014 to December 2015 by the German Leprosy and TB Relief Association (GLRA), a non-governmental organisation. A sub-national German government body, Nordrhein-Westfälische Stiftung zur Förderung der Leprahilfe, provided the funding. Talking Health was designed to educate people in eight districts in northern Uganda. The programme involved a local FM station Radio Wa, the district administrations and Uganda's National TB and Leprosy Programme (NTLP). It spread general information, but also offered medical services and built capacities at local health facilities.

Spreading the news

About 2 million people live in the region, and almost all can receive Radio Wa, which has been running health programmes for a long time. In the context of Talking Health, it began focusing on leprosy. Affected people shared their stories on the air, and listeners could call in and would get competent advice.

Leprosy became a regular topic in Radio Wa's health programme which is called Wa Clinic and is aired on Sundays. Presenter and guests discussed the causes and the treatment of leprosy.

A radio soap opera tackled issues such as stigma and ignorance. People affected by leprosy (PALs) publicly discussed their experiences during and after treatment. They spoke about the issues of discrimination and rehabilitation. Studio guests included traditional healers, faith leaders, politicians, leprosy experts and government officials.

The focus on leprosy proved to be very popular, as the great number of call-ins proved. Previously, the radio programme had focused on reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and malaria, and listeners were interested in the additional topic.

Talking Health

Two persons affected by leprosy take part in a radio programme.

Skin camps

The most important contribution Radio Wa made, however, was to inform people about the skin camps that toured from district to district, providing opportunities to get diagnosed and access treatment. More than half of the patients who attended the skin camps had heard about the camps thanks to Radio Wa.

In the village, where the next skin camp would take place, extra announcements were made. In some places, churches and mosques spread the information as well. Radio Wa also motivated several patients to go to the Lira referral hospital, and quite a few of them came in time to prevent disfigurement and disability. The camps also provided a good opportunity to further educate local health staff on leprosy (see box, p. 28).

The camps started at 10:00 o'clock in the morning. Normally, hundreds of patients would already be waiting in front of the respective health facility. At first there was a lesson in public health for all, which was followed by questions and answers session. The sessions were recorded and excerpts were aired during the radio show the next Sunday. This way, the reality of leprosy was brought into people's homes.

At the camps, people were examined and treated after the educational part. Patients suspected to have leprosy were referred to specialists for confirmation. They were then given personal advice and had the opportunity to ask questions. Moreover, they were registered and given medicine. The treatment started immediately. Patients learned when and where to pick up the next dose of medicine. They went home knowing they had finally found competent help.

The total number of patients seen in 13 skin camps was 5354, out of whom 43 were diagnosed as leprosy patients. Another 29 were still on follow-up at the start of 2016 to determine the final diagnosis. The rest had a wide variety of skin conditions, mostly fungal and bacterial infections. Appropriate treatment or referral was provided.

Talking Health was coordinated by Doryn Ebong, a nurse who lives in the northern Ugandan town of Lira and has been cooperating with Radio Wa for health-related broadcasts for a long time. Her coordination committee included a journalist, two persons affected by leprosy, an NTLP officer and district officers. Ebong handled the budget and reported to the German donor NGO. Ebong's approach was consultative, letting the districts take the lead in identifying

the health facilities and health workers to be trained. She was thus actually more a facilitator than a director.

The project had several strong points:

- It addressed an important tropical disease that is normally neglected.
- It reached out to rural people in their own language and in a culturally appropriate way.
- It was very cost efficient.
- It relied on – and contributed to further developing the capacities of – local institutions, including of course the health facilities concerned and the radio station itself.
- It's impact will be sustained thanks to the increased competence of both the local health staff and the radio team.

It is noteworthy, moreover, that the skin camps did not only contribute to raising awareness for the fight against leprosy. The project actually achieved more than that because it promoted skin health in general and increased the reputation of science-based health facilities. ←

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Info booklet for health staff.

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Linking theoretical learning and practical experience

All too often, local health staff are not familiar with neglected tropical diseases. In Uganda, for example, they need to know about leprosy.

"Yes, I have seen this kind of skin patches many times before, but I did not know that this could be leprosy." This is what Anges Okwori said, when Eli Ogang of Uganda's National TB and Leprosy Programme (NTLP) put on display some pictures during a presentation at a district health facility in Oyam. Okwori works there as a nurse, and Ogang was giving her team a one-day training on leprosy. The next day, they would all take part in a skin camp that was hosted in the context of the Talking Health project (see main article).

Ogang's lecture included all issues of immediate relevance to the district-level health workers – from the first symptoms of simple skin irritation, to the measurement of the loss of sensation with probes, to the treatment regiments and the many ways of rehabilitation, should patients have already developed disabilities.

Lost toes and fingers don't grow back, of course, but a patient's quality life can benefit from tailor-made orthopaedic appliances like special sandals, for example. Moreover, further damage to limbs that have lost their sensitivity can be prevented.

The team was not only informed about the causes, signs, diagnosis and management of the disease, but also briefed on the social impact such as stigmatisation and exclusion from communities. The ultimate goal, after all, is to rehabilitate patients and enable them to live good lives in spite of their affliction.

At the skin camp one day later, the team applied the newly gained knowledge. Several hundred patients came to the event, and in difficult cases, the local health-staff consulted the expert who had come to Oyam for this event from the regional referral hospital in Lira. Linking theoretical learning with practical experience helps to build lasting knowledge that is not forgotten as fast as abstract insights normally are.

After the skin camp, Okwori said: "I can now tell the difference between allergies, bacterial infections and fungal infection. Before, I would just treat them like fungal infections."

Talking Health

Returning to everyday life

The success of Colombia's peace talks will depend substantially on how the state chooses to address the needs of the 8 million people who were affected or displaced by the civil war. Researcher make proposals on how victim groups, municipal administrations and members of the business community can cooperate to develop local strategies in support of victims' efforts to rebuild their lives.

By Gregor Maaß and Mario Pilz

What is the best way to help the victims of Colombia's civil war to reintegrate into rural communities' social and economic life? In the Caldas region in central Colombia, a research team has looked for answers, and the scholars from Berlin's Humboldt University and the Colombian Autonomous University of Manizales (UAM) have came up with some proposals. They suggest:

- strengthening local markets,
- providing psychosocial support for victims and
- improving coordination between farmers' associations and groups of victims.

The study was commissioned by GIZ in cooperation with the regional government.

The approach proposed by the scholars can also prove useful in other parts of Colombia. Communities across the country will face the question of how to support victims' reintegration into normal life.

As one-size-fits-all policies normally do not succeed, attention must focus both on the specific economic potential of every region as well as to the specific circumstances of the people who were affected by war and displacement. Dialogue between local governments, business leaders and victim groups is indispensable.

For many years, this understanding has guided the efforts of GIZ's CERCAPAZ programme, which

The victims of civil war are mostly smallholders.

Harrison/Lineair

promotes dialogue between civil-society groups and state institutions. The goal is to cooperate on drafting sustainable peace strategies with locally-specific solutions. In line with Colombia's national peace agenda and taking local specifics into account, the programme focuses on victims participation and reparation, citizens' security and peaceful coexistence.

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Because rural Colombia is quite diverse and the victims of the war are a most heterogeneous group, there is often a lack of reliable information, which in turn makes it difficult to draft well-targeted strategies. Responding to this challenge, the scholars analysed the regional economy and assessed the victims' situation.

The area under investigation comprises Marquetalia, Norcasia, Pensilvania and Samaná, four municipalities in the eastern part of the Caldas department. Armed conflict is largely a thing of the past in this rural areas, so it was possible to do research.

Caldas is a coffee-producing region, and coffee continues to be among its most important agricultural products. Cocoa, avocados, plantains, sugar cane and natural rubber are also cultivated. In some places, extensive livestock farming and forestry play a role too. Beyond agriculture, there are very few sources of income.

Colombia has lately been importing more food, and this trend is putting significant pressure on the domestic agriculture, which is acutely felt in Caldas. Farms are becoming less and less profitable because of poor infrastructure, high transport costs and the dependence on middlemen. In 2013, small farmers from across the country aired their grievances in one of the largest social protest movements that Colombia had seen in years.

Civil-war victims living in Caldas are in a similarly precarious situation as rural Colombians in general. Unlike their neighbours, however, only few displaced people own enough cultivable land to regain a foothold as farmers. Moreover, it is common for victims to have become dependent on state aid, the indiscriminate distribution of which has ultimately kept them from taking individual initiatives to improve their situation.

It compounds problems that, lacking psychosocial support, many people are still struggling to cope with traumatic war experiences. The victims tend to withdraw from social live and hardly participate in public affairs. Their mental suffering typically keeps them from developing an entrepreneurial spirit.

What difference the farmers' market makes

The crucial question, therefore, is what will make all actors cooperate on solutions. Especially in rural areas, it is essential that agriculture and trade flourish at the local and regional levels. In view of this need, the municipal administration of Pensilvania has set up the "mercado libre campesino" in cooperation with local producer organisations and interest groups. This farmers' market has become a space for the marketing of local goods in the town centre.

For years, goods brought in from Bogotá dominated the local market, even though local producers could have satisfied the local demand. Because

Symbolic reconciliation activity of victims of the violent conflict in Colombia.

Hope for millions of victims of Colombia's civil war

Pilz

After a half-century of civil war, the guerrilla organisation FARC and the Colombian government seem closer than ever to signing peace agreements. In over three years of talks, the two sides have discussed key causes of the conflict. Not coincidentally, they focused on rural areas first. After all, rural poverty was what triggered the rebels' armed insurrection decades ago – and it continues to shape Colombia today.

Apart from the Colombian military and the FARC, the rebel group ELN, paramilitary organisations and criminal groups are involved in the armed conflict. Large numbers of people have died or been displaced. Rural areas are affected in particular. As of June 2016, the National Victims Unit had registered 8 million affected people, approximately 6.8 million of whom are internally displaced persons (IDPs). Only Syria has more IDPs currently.

In spite of the ongoing civil war, the government has begun implementing a reparation policy in recent years. It is meant to restore the rights of victims and provide socio-economic stability. Colombia's law concerning war victims has earned the country international recognition, but it has yet to be implemented. Last year, a critical report by the Comptroller General of the Republic of Colombia highlighted the worrisome situation of the war victims and drew attention to the widespread massive and systematic impoverishment that affects them.

of high production and transport costs, poor quality and rather volatile supply, local products were hardly on offer however. Moreover, there is a general sense of distrust in crisis regions, and people are especially cautious in regard to others. This attitude can thwart normal market activity to a considerable extent.

Thanks to the "mercado libre campesino", many small farmers are now selling their products directly without having to rely on intermediaries. For the first time, there is a suitable trading platform for regionally-grown products, and consumers are becoming aware of them. Personal contact and direct exchange between growers, consumers, traders and producer associations help to build mutual trust.

Furthermore, the market has created a space for new ideas to develop. For instance, a young family is now selling its unique yoghurt creations to a wider public, instead of tediously trying to market products door-to-door.

Gliing/Lineair

Coffee is one oft he most important trading products in Colombia.

Psychosocial support

The trauma people suffered in the war still affects them psychologically. In order to deal with their experiences, they need professional help. Projects aimed to support war victims should include psychosocial support. In addition to individual counselling, collective approaches matter because they foster social cohesion.

Sol Naciente, a private foundation, is doing impressive work in this area, exemplifying what it means to come to terms with wartime trauma. Arts and cultural activities allow people to gain self-confidence, experience joy and feel hope for the future once again. A dance school led by Layla, a belly dancer, is at the centre of activities. Her class is extremely popular and attracts about 300 dance students.

Layla offers dance lessons both in urban Pensilvania as well as in rural areas that were hit particularly hard by the civil war. Her classes serve a clear psychosocial function. The protected space of shared dance lessons helps people regain their dignity. As they refind themselves in dance and self-expression, they begin to muster the strength needed to become involved in social life once again.

Meeting at eye-level

The establishment of a local farmers' market may seem trivial, and the need to provide psychosocial care in crises and (post-)conflict regions may seem obvious. Difficult circumstances and a torn social fabric, that are typical in rural Colombia, however, mean that these things cannot be taken for granted. Moreover, these issues are interrelated and must be considered in context from the very start. Transparent involvement and targeted, but nevertheless open-ended dialogue between all relevant interest groups are among the basic building blocks for any meaningful reparation strategy.

In the course of the research, it became evident again and again that mutual distrust, a poor understanding of other people's interests, lack of expertise and poorly defined responsibilities can nip inklings of social inclusion in the bud. Although many registered victims are organised in associations, only a few members actually assume active roles and engage in interaction with other parties. It depends largely on their representatives, however, whether victims' needs are successfully communicated.

Victims rarely participate in substantial decision-making processes that would allow them to actively shape their socio-economic environment. Making matters more difficult, cooperation remains limited among local farmers. Their associations exist primarily to express their interests, rather than to organise joint efforts. The result is a failure to implement specific, shared marketing strategies.

The local government could make a difference by improving the conditions for public participation. If victims' socio-economic potential is recognised and other relevant actors are able to take part in realising it, reparation will come within reach. ←

Link

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Lessons from Mariana

When a dam burst in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais in 2015, the ensuing mudslide killed 19 people and caused major devastation. Disasters of this kind result from investments in environmental safety being considered breaks on growth. To strike a healthy balance between natural resource exploration, economic development and environmental sustainability, that attitude must change.

By Renata Buriti

The accident near the town of Mariana in Minas Gerais was probably the worst environmental disaster in Brazil's history. A dam holding millions of cubic meters of mining waste collapsed, and the flood it released tore down another one. The result was a mudslide contaminated with heavy metals. It affected over 40 municipalities, destroyed fauna and flora and polluted the Rio Doce. Ultimately, the waste was flooded into the Atlantic Ocean. According to the Brazilian Civil Police, the dam infrastructure had not been maintained properly. Disaster due to infrastructure, is unfortunately nothing unusual in the mining industry, and rural areas tend to be particularly affected.

Apart from the loss of lives, the disaster had other painful impacts. Over 1,600 people were displaced and lost their livelihoods. Moreover, many workers lost their jobs because the mining company Samarco was been paralysed by the accident. It is not clear whether it will ever operate again. Samarco is a joint of two of the three biggest mining companies in the world: Vale and BHP Billington. Giants of this sort should handle safety issues responsibly, but they failed. Vale is a multinational corporation based in Rio de Janeiro, and BHP Billington's head-office is in Perth, Australia.

Riverine communities and farmers lost their sources of income. The toxic mud killed tonnes of fish of many varieties and made entire stretches of the river unsuitable for fishing. Soil that was flooded has become worthless for agriculture. Local transport, power and water infrastructure was damaged too, and that has negative impacts on other industries, including tourism. The regional economy will thus suffer for years to come. It is impossible to assess the exact costs.

The mudslide affected 600 kilometres of the river's course. Some species that only existed in this river are probably now extinct. Experts say they cannot tell how long it will take until the local fauna recovers. State agencies have pledged to monitor the disaster impacts and the success of reconstruction measures for at least ten years.

Hefty fines

A special commission was appointed by Brazil's National Congress to determine whether the disaster was the result of corporate negligence or an inevitable natural catastrophe. The commission blamed the mining company. After a judicial investigation, Samarco was sentenced to pay fines amounting to 20 billion Reais (the equivalent of about € 5.2 billion), more than was ever paid after an industrial accident in Brazil before. State authorities and Samarco agreed on the creation of a fund to finance rehabilitation and compensation measures.

However, many observers argue that the underlying problems must yet be tackled. Making a private-sector company pay for the consequences of negligence is important, but more needs to be done. Brazil needs more stringent regulation and supervision of the mining industry, but that is no priority for the national and state governments. Strategies to link economic development and environmental protection are still missing. As the hazards mining causes do not directly affect Brazil's urban agglomerations, where most people live, these issues are not high on the political agenda. Rural people suffer the consequences. If environmental costs were considered in realistic terms, however, fast economic growth would look much less attractive. Mariana is a stark example of the true costs that accrue because of unsustainable development in the short as well as the long run.

Brazil's mining sector has long been an important pillar of the national economy. It accounts for around four percent of GDP and about 20 % of exports. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, the mining industry provides about eight percent of industrial jobs in the country, not counting employment in its supply chain (for business services or the provision of machines, equipment et cetera).

Need for action

The national mining code dates back to the 1960s. It has not been reformed to match Brazil's progressive environmental legislation. Accordingly, mining

Basso/NurPhoto/picture-alliance

Rescue mission in November 2015.

businesses still have too much leeway for exploiting resources without paying attention to environmental risks and ecological impacts. It is too easy for them to operate on indigenous land, for example, or in areas where nature is supposed to be protected. Moreover, it needs to be monitored whether they are keeping their facilities in good shape.

A reform of the mining code was announced in 2013, but its draft pays little attention to the environment. The main priority is to cut red tape, speed up mining operations and boost corporate productivity. On the other hand, the National Mining Plan 2030 does propose measures to promote environmental sustainability in the sector. Good intentions, however, are not enough. Coherent action and stringent legislation are necessary.

The best laws, however, are worthless unless they are enforced. It is irritating that government spending for monitoring the mining industry is actually in decline. According to Contas Abertas, a non-governmental organisation, federal authorities only spent 13.2 % of the funds allocated to oversight programmes in 2015.

Brazil's national government is currently rocked by crisis. President Dilma Rouseff has been suspended from office in impeachment proceedings, and Michel Temer, the acting president, does not have a firm grip on power, not least because he is being named in the context of corruption allegations (see D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2016/06, p. 11). Given the severe recession the country is suffering, it does not look as if his cabinet would regulate the mining sector more stringently soon. As in the past, fast growth seems the top priority. The price will eventually have to be paid. The lessons of Mariana should be heeded by all levels of government. ←

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More effective partnerships

Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will hinge on improving international cooperation. The OECD offers advice.

By Hildegard Lingnau

For more than 60 years the international community has engaged in development cooperation. Although great progress has been made, more needs to be done. It is frustrating that widely agreed principles of effective development cooperation are still not being generally applied. Major challenges include:

- conflicting policy goals at national and international levels,
- fast changing priorities at all levels,
- poor coordination of various parties and
- the fragmentation of efforts.

For humanity to achieve the SDGs, matters must improve. The SDGs were adopted in September 2015 by the UN General Assembly. They add up to a universal, transformative and inclusive global agenda that spells out what must be done to ensure environmental stability, safeguard peace and end poverty. Success will require better global governance, strong mechanisms of accountability and effective international cooperation.

Tribune

To achieve this, partnerships are needed. However, the term "partnership" encompasses a wide range of approaches, structures and purposes. It is impossible to discuss this multitude as a homogenous whole. Moreover, experience tells us that more international partnerships do not automatically translate into more or faster progress.

To make partnerships work in practice, it is necessary to take into account the interests and priorities of the partners involved. It is essential to strike the right balance between the thorough debate and the ability to make fast progress on the ground. The requirements of accountability and flexibility both deserve attention.

The OECD's Development Cooperation Report 2015 (DCR 2015) assesses empirical evidence and, on this basis, spells out 10 principles for good partnerships. For obvious reasons, it picks up the threads from the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), which resulted from a series of high-level forums on aid and development effectiveness from 2003 to 2011 (see box, p. 35).

Photoshot/picture-alliance

Infectious diseases transcend national borders: fighting the Zika virus in San José, Costa Rica.

The DCR 2015 fully endorses the GPEDC insight that global development, and thus the SDG agenda, is not "government only" business, but needs "everyone everywhere" to do their jobs. In particular, the private sector must be involved because of its role concerning investments, job generation and the use of new technology. Indeed, this year's DCR (DCR 2016) will assess the SDGs as "business opportunities". At the same time, civil society matters for raising awareness, keeping a check on the public and private sectors and demanding effective global action.

The time when governments were considered the main drivers and financiers of development is over. The principles that guide partnerships must now apply to all relevant actors. This is feasible. The DRC 2015 sums up ten lessons to be learned:

1. High-level leadership is needed. Unless top leaders become involved, it is impossible to overcome barriers to action, keep up political momentum and mobilise appropriate public and private resources.
2. A good balance between global strategy and local priorities is essential. If partnerships are not country-led and context specific, they are unlikely to achieve their goals.
3. Duplication and fragmentation of efforts must be avoided. Partnerships should be geared to reducing, rather than increasing complexity.
4. Governance must be inclusive and transparent. All stakeholders must be informed adequately for decision-making, and their voices must be heard. This is the way to build the trust needed to deliver results.
5. It is important to choose a partnership model that fits the challenge to be dealt with.
6. There must be agreement on principles, targets, implementation plans and enforcement mechanisms. Shared principles result in motivation, and

well-defined targets serve the purposes of implementation, reporting and monitoring. Soft enforcement mechanisms such as peer reviews provide opportunities for learning and are also valuable tools to assess and encourage progress.

7. Roles and responsibilities must be defined unambiguously in order to ensure accountability.
8. It is necessary to focus on results, not inputs. The ability to demonstrate a straightforward link between resources and outcomes helps to bring actors on board and to keep them committed.
9. Progress towards goals and targets must be monitored. Solid data serves evidence-based decision-making and facilitates accountability.
10. Sufficient financial resources must be mobilised and used effectively. Without reliable and predictable funding, partnerships can neither pursue long-term strategies nor spur innovation. Moreover, the pooled funds are an important incentive for joint action and reduce the risk of fragmentation.

These ten rules make obvious sense. That is not surprising, since they are rooted in the empirical evidence of 10 other case studies apart from assessing the GPEDC. The DCR 2015 also deals with:

- the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundations' engagement in partnerships such as the vaccine alliance Gavi, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and others,
- the Global Partnership for Education,
- Sustainable Energy for All (SE4All),
- the Aid-for-Trade Initiative (AfT),
- the Effective Institutions Platform (EIP),
- the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (IDPS),
- the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21),
- the Grow Africa partnership and
- Reducing Emission from Deforestation and Forest Degradation (REDD+).

If decision-makers stick to the principles listed above, the SDGs can be achieved. This is the way to start a virtuous circle of action, with good results leading to further commitment which again delivers good results. The alternative is business as usual, which is likey to result in a vicious circle of failure that undermines global governance, diminishes trust and delivers only very limited results. ←

Link

OECD: Development Co-operation Report 2015 – Making partnerships effective coalitions for action.
http://www.oecd.org/dac/development-co-operation-report-20747721.htm

Hildegard Lingnau

wrote this essay in her capacity as senior counsellor at the OECD. She has since become the head of cooperation at the German Embassy in Kenya. This contribution reflects her personal views.

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Keeping up the momentum

Growing global interdependence is nothing new. Global governance, however, has not kept pace. Policies are still mostly drafted and implemented at the nation state level, even though most challenges are international and cannot be dealt with by national governments acting on their own. Global warming, contagious diseases and financial stability are only three of many examples.

Globalisation is making the notion of state sovereignty problematic. Forms of international cooperation are changing and forming a complex system of global governance. This system, however, is hampered by many things, including the uneven performance of governments in regard to international commitments and the insufficient harmonisation of development efforts.

According to the UN Committee for Development Policy, "important areas of common interest are currently not covered, or sparsely covered, by global governance mechanisms, while other areas are considered to be overdetermined or overregulated." Indeed, multilateral initiatives of the past two decades did not improve global governance as desired.

Important steps included the UN summits on Financing for Development in Monterrey (2002), Doha (2010) and Addis Ababa (2015), the annual UN climate summits or the High-Level Forums on Aid Effectiveness in Rome (2003), Paris (2005), Accra (2008) and Busan (2011).

Some principles bear repetition. They include the five pillars of aid and development-effectiveness as were spelled out in the Paris Declaration at the High-Level Forum in 2005:

- Ownership: developing countries are the owners of their development.
- Alignment: development assistance must be aligned to their policies, institutions and proceedures.
- Harmonisation: donor governments' development partners must harmonise their action.
- Managing for results: management must be geared to results.
- Mutual accountability: the parties involved must be mutually accountable.

Though these principles have left their mark on development cooperation, implementation has been uneven. The conference in Nairobi in November/December this year will provide an opportunity to discuss the matter and update the cooperation principles: the Kenyan government will host the second High-Level Meeting (HLM2) of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Partnership (GPEDC).

The GPEDC was launched in Busan in 2011 to keep up the momentum of the aid/development-effectiveness agenda.

On behalf of the OECD, researchers have assessed its strong and weak points. The involvement of cabinet-level leaders has helped drive the aid/development-effectiveness agenda, and so did the well-defined principles and ongoing monitoring. Downsides, however, included the great complexity of the agenda and the lack of instruments to enforce non-binding commitments. The GPEDC could benefit from applying the guidelines for good partnerships that the OECD has spelled out in its Development Cooperation Report 2015, which is based on the empirical evidence of the GPEDC and 10 other global partnerships (see main article).

Link

http://effectivecooperation.org/monitoring-country-progress/explore-monitoring-data/

Including everyone

The inclusion of people with disabilities is an important issue on the development agenda. The Centre for Rural Development (SLE) of Humboldt University in Berlin recently published a study plus a manual, showing how the inclusion of people with disabilities can be systematically and sustainably incorporated into development cooperation with partner countries.

By Bettina Kieck

The study was commissioned by Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the GIZ-project "Inclusion of persons with disabilities". It provides the theoretical framework for tackling the issue of inclusion, while its manual offers practical advice for all interested parties.

The research team that prepared the study used the opportunity to draft a manual with recommendations based on practical experience. The proposals resulted from numerous interviews with activists from disabled people's organisations, GIZ staff, policymakers, instructors from vocational schools and responsible stakeholders from the transportation sector. The research team tested some of the proposals in workshops in Namibia and modified them accordingly. The practical examples in the publication are all based on first-hand experience.

One reason Namibia was considered a good location to conduct the research is the effort of the Namibian government to promote inclusion. This topic is an explicit component of various policy measures. In 2015, the government established a ministry devoted to addressing the needs of people with disabilities. Awareness-raising campaigns are educating local people about the marginalisation that people with disabilities experience. Nevertheless, there is an enormous gap between theory and practice. By the way, Namibia is the largest per capita recipient of official development assistance from Germany.

In Namibia, the researchers assessed barriers and needs. They paid particular attention to vocational education and transportation. On this basis, they made recommendations to GIZ Namibia, including:

- to provide sensitivity training and raise awareness among vocational school instructors and other actors, including company directors, human-resource managers and other decision-makers in the private sector,
- to identify core areas where GIZ consultants can promote inclusion as a cross-cutting issue,
- to involve Namibian disabled people's organisations in drafting measures and promote these groups as GIZ partners, for instance by collaborating with disability trainers from civil-society organisations,
- to build and expand links between vocational schools and the labour market in order to facilitate the transition from school to work for job candidates with disabilities and
- to provide financial and technical support to partner organisations for the development of accessible instructional materials for trainees with disabilities.

The research team also considered GIZ's transport programme in Namibia. Mobility is a central concern for people with disabilities.

Facilities that people take for granted in an advanced countries like Germany, like barrier-free infrastructure and accessible public transportation at least in larger cities, are only beginning to bud in developing countries. In Namibia, getting to

Oliver Gerhard/Image Broker/Lineair

Schools in Namibia are not set up for the inclusion of disabled children.

school, work, training centres and public buildings is very difficult for people with impaired vision or mobility, for example if they depend on wheelchairs.

GIZ can help make Namibia's public infrastructure more accessible, particularly in regard to lifts, barrier-free buildings and suitable pavements. Moreover, the acquisition of kneeling buses, which lower the floor at bus stops so it becomes easier to board them, is now close at hand in Namibia. It is always cheaper to ensure accessibility features when a new facility is built than to retrofit existing buildings with ramps and lifts.

The study also recommends:

- awareness-raising and education in order to stop discriminatory behaviour on the part of bus and taxi drivers towards people with disabilities,
- awareness-raising and information for GIZ decision-makers and partners in transportation on the topic of inclusion and building standards (national standards should incorporate requirements for accessible infrastructure),
- making the principles of accessible construction a mandatory part of the engineering curriculum (for future civil engineers/city planners) and
- the systematic inclusion of this topic into the bachelor and master's civil engineering programmes at the University of Namibia.

Some of these recommendations have been implemented in the meantime. GIZ will hire someone to address crosscutting issues, and that person will also be in charge of disability issues. Kneeling buses will be acquired as soon as possible, and sensitivity training for drivers will take place. Inclusive measures, moreover, are being enacted in vocational education. Instructors are receiving training on how to deal with people with disabilities, and schools are becoming properly equipped to meet the needs of disabled students.

Inclusion matters in terms of economic development and poverty reduction, both of which are central to GIZ's efforts in Namibia. The new manual provides a great deal of information on strategies and methods geared to make GIZ's programmes inclusive.

The manual includes a tool to systematically test exactly how inclusive an organisation is. If it is not inclusive at all, the authors show what tangible steps serve to improve matters fast. The recommendations touch on issues ranging from the design of work places to organisational and institutional barriers. A core message is that costs of excluding people with disabilities and ignoring them exceed those of inclusion. Disability mainstreaming is not simply about charity and moral conviction, it is primarily about fully tapping the considerable potential of people with disabilities.

It makes sense to build facilities without barriers, since retrofitting is more expensive. In a similar sense, it is important to consider disabilities early on in developmental programmes and projects. Small things often have the greatest impact, and people with disabilities tend to be the best experts on what should be prioritised. Involving them and their representatives in the planning stages of a programme is the most effective way to ensure that their needs and expertise are taken into account.

The manual's title is "Inclusion grows". Inclusion is indeed seen as a process, because goals are not achievable over night. Good planning and joint efforts of a range of committed actors are what it takes to ensure that rights of people with disabilities are respected over the long term.

The manual does not raise demands, but makes recommendations. It is itself a living project. The authors expect the book to be expanded and modified depending on users' feedback. GIZ will distribute the manual in selected partner countries so it can be edited based on users' "reality check". ←

Links

Kieck, B., Ayeh, D., Beitzer, P., Gerdes, N., Günther, P., Wiemers, B., 2015: Inclusion grows. Toolkit on disability mainstreaming for the German Development Cooperation. *http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/series/sle/265-2/PDF/265-2.pdf*

Kieck, B., Ayeh, D., Beitzer, P., Gerdes, N., Günther, P., Wiemers, B., 2016: Developing a manual on disability mainstreaming for the German Development Cooperation – case study Namibia. *http://edoc.hu-berlin.de/series/sle/265/PDF/265.pdf*

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The situation of people with disabilities in Namibia

According to estimates by the WHO, around 15 % of people in developing countries live with some form of disability. Namibia is no different, though specific numbers are not available. Namibia is also facing many problems that affect sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, including high unemployment and unequal income distribution. The quality of education remains inadequate despite far-reaching reforms.

Nevertheless, in contrast to most developing countries, initial efforts have been made to improve inclusion, and there has been notable success. In 2015, a ministry was established to address the needs of people with disabilities. Inclusion is thus on the agenda. Awareness-raising campaigns are underway to change people's negative attitudes towards the disabled.

Research shows that people with disabilities still tend to be poorer than people without disabilities in Namibia, for instance because they are excluded from the education system. Rates of illiteracy are high among the people concerned, and fewer of them get formal training in vocational schools. These facts show that, so far, the Namibian government can demonstrate little in terms of practical success. The will is there, but problems arise due to lack of expertise and funding. Equipping vocational schools with adequate technology and barrier-free instructional materials is currently the greatest challenge. Furthermore, the schools need admission procedures that people can deal with in sign language. They must even provide opportunities to applicants who cannot take a written test.

Investment in skills training pays off

Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) create jobs and income. They are the foundation of well-performing economies. Bruno Wenn of DEG, the German development finance institution, explained in an interview with Dagmar Wolf why investment in vocational training matters, taking Brazil as an example.

Interview with Bruno Wenn

Why do so many medium-sized German companies choose São Paulo as a business location?
There are long-established links. Many companies already have a presence in São Paulo. The legal system is in place, the German chamber of commerce is there, the German Club and the German community in general. This infrastructure is especially beneficial to SMEs that want to enter the market. Notaries, lawyers, tax accountants and other professional service providers understand German companies. Other places in Brazil, however, lack this kind of infrastructure, so companies have to start there from scratch, and that would be more expensive.

What are the major obstacles your clients face in Brazil?
One thing many companies complain about, is the lack of infrastructure – especially outside São Paulo. This applies to roads, power and water supply, sanitation and waste management, for instance. There is also a lack of qualified workers. Red tape and legal uncertainties are also challenges, partly because the laws are unclear. For example, it is currently being discussed to raise the legal working age from 16 to 18. But what are young people supposed to do after leaving school at 16 or 17? Large companies can run skills training workshops for apprentices, but smaller companies usually cannot do so.

If there are too few skilled workers, aren't companies interested in training young people?
They actually have to train them, because Brazil's state-run education system does not provide people with the professional qualifications that companies require. You need an appropriately trained workforce to meet the quality standards German products are known for. If someone cannot draft a construction blueprint, she or he normally will not be able to read that kind of document either, and thus will not be able to build the machine correctly. If companies want to sell high-value goods, they need high-quality production, plus high-quality after-sales services. When something doesn't work properly, they need to send support fast, and only a competent colleague will be up to the task. Moreover, support services are often provided online today. Computers are used to identify the problem, and repair means to fix the software. These are additional challenges, and the staff of small workshops in rural areas must be put in the position to rise to them.

Do companies train people beyond their own need?
Well, it is often hard to retain people with good skills. That is no different in Brazil than anywhere else in the world, so it makes sense to train people beyond one's own needs. And if mechanics that have been trained by Bosch, the car component manufacturer, later start their own business, Bosch can benefit: they'll be potential clients.

Is training on the job needed at all levels – for low-skilled workers and university graduates alike?
Yes, it is. The reason is that workers' knowledge has to match current needs at all levels. In many emerging markets and developing countries, the governmental education system basically delivers theoretical knowledge. In Germany, practical competence is valued as well, and that is something special. Where it is not common to teach practical skills, companies have to assume the responsibility for making sure their employees are capable of rising to their jobs' challenges.

So Brazil does not link theory and practice in the way that Germany's vocational training system is famous for?
Well, the SENAI (Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial – the national training service for industrial apprenticeship) offers vocational training courses in manufacturing and advanced training programmes for more experienced staff. It is partly controlled by the government and cooperates with universities. But it does not run courses for all economic sectors, and SENAI training is not a general requirement for employment. The great advantage of Germany's dual system is that the practical part of the training takes place on the job. So far, that is hardly done in most emerging markets and developing countries. Companies that want to invest in these markets have to be enterprising and might want to cooperate with others on training. In India, Don Bosco Mondo, a Catholic outfit, is a good partner. In cooperation with companies, it develops training courses – to the benefit of both low-skilled youngsters and employers.

What role does DEG play in terms of promoting vocational training?

dw

Training at Bosch in Campinas, Brazil.

Among other things, we support related efforts in the context of develoPPP.de, the programme with which the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) supports innovative development partnerships with private-sector companies in emerging markets and developing countries. A lot of the funding is used for training and education purposes. Skills training is a huge challenge and rather expensive, so many SME managers hesitate to tackle it in emerging markets and developing countries.

How does develoPPP.de work?

The target group are German and European companies that are interested in sustainable, long-term investments in developing countries and emerging markets. The BMZ provides funding worth up to € 200,000 per project, though not more than 50 % of a project's total costs at most. Companies can submit proposals in competitions four times a year. Projects go on for up to three years, and they concern all sorts of sectors and issues. Think of a pilot project, or measures to improve environmental performance or boost skills, for example. What matters is the developmental relevance of the proposals. For many SMEs, it is actually quite a challenge to cover 50 % of the costs because that is a lot of money. But if they are serious about a project, they will be willing to pay a price. Their own contribution is an indispensable indication of assuming responsibility.

And what else are you doing apart from develoPPP.de?

We are part of an international initiative called "Let's Work". It aims to bring about long-term employment in fair conditions. Last year, for example, we did research on skills gaps. The difference between what companies need and what potential employees are capable of all too often blocks social and economic development. Our report "Bridging the skills gaps in developing countries" assesses a number of companies and shows how they dealt with issues in targeted action concerning workers, the supply chain and local communities (see D+C/E+Z e-Paper 2016/03, p. 6). The publication includes a checklist, so it can help companies to assess their own needs and requirements.

Does DEG support only German companies or also Brazilian companies?

Our mission is to support private-sector investments that serve developmental goals in emerging markets and developing countries, and that includes Brazilian companies. We'd also support Chinese companies in Brazil if they meet our standards – or Brazilian ones in Mozambique, for example. Our job is to support small and medium-sized companies that would not be able to make good ideas come true due to lack of long-term financing. DEG either becomes their shareholder or supports them with long-term loans. Moreover, we cooperate with banks and investment funds in emerging markets and developing countries. We lend them money and help them to improve their risk management, so they become able to serve our SME target group in the best possible way. Our vision is the development of a strong and capable SME sector as we have in Germany. In Germany, 90 % of all companies are SMEs, and SMEs are similarly important pillars of the economies of many developing countries.

Tribune

Links

DEG: Study: Bridging the skills gaps in developing countries.
https://www.deginvest.de/DEG-Documents-in-English/About-DEG/What-is-our-impact/Bridging-Skills-Gaps_DEG_2016.pdf

Let's Work Partnership:
https://letswork.org/

Bruno Wenn

is chairman of the Management Board of DEG – Deutsche Investitions- und Entwicklungsgesellschaft, which is a subsidiary of Germany's KfW Banking Group and supports private-sector development in developing countries.
http://www.deginvest.de

Low ambitions

The UN Human Rights Council passed guiding principles on business and human rights in June 2011, defining governments' duties and private-sector companies' responsibilities. Five years on, a mere eleven governments have adopted national action plans to meet those guidelines. Germany's plan is set to be adopted soon. The draft version was published by five federal ministries. It fails to meet the expectations of civil-society organisations, but apparently exceeds what Germany's Finance Ministry finds acceptable.

By Armin Paasch

The legal concept of "human rights due diligence" is at the heart of the guiding principles. It requires companies to assess the human rights implications of their companies' activities and business relationships all over the world. Companies have the responsibility to identity and assess human rights risks, to take appropriate measures and to report in a transparent manner. Accordingly, Germany's draft action plan expresses "the expectation" that German companies will implement human rights due diligence along their entire supply chains. The snag, however, is that the legal language is only binding for 174 corporate entities that belong to Germany's Federal Government. No other company is threatened with sanctions should it fail to comply.

The Federal Government wants half of all German companies with a staff of more than 500 persons to establish management systems that ensure human-rights due diligence by 2020. The plan is to do random checks from 2018. Only should the corporate sector fail to comply, does the government contemplate additional measures, including legal ones. It is not clear, however, what criteria will serve to assess companies' performance. It is even less obvious, moreover, that a future Federal Government will feel bound by the proposals made by the current one.

Trade unions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) that are active in fields of global development and human rights want more to happen. We insist that human rights due diligence must be made legally binding for all corporations based in Germany and include their foreign affiliates and suppliers. Breaches of the principle must be sanctioned with fines, and victims must get legal standing before German courts so they become able to sue for compensation. Moreover, the Federal Government must not procure goods or services from companies that have been proven to disregard their human rights obligations. Finally, we demand that human rights are made a core concern when the EU negotiates or implements future trade deals.

Chuquiure/Lineair

Peruvian copper mine: human-rights abuses are common in resource extraction.

Recent research done by various scholars has shown again and again that human-rights breaches in the context of the activities of German-based companies are nothing exceptional. On the contrary, they are a structural challenge that is evident in international activities concerning mining, energy, agriculture and manufacturing. To date, not one of the 30 corporations that are included in the DAX stock-market index is implementing the UN Guiding Principles in a comprehensive manner, though 23 of them have been blamed of human-rights breaches in the past 10 years. According to a study that was funded by the EU Commission, moreover, it has hardly any impact when private-sector companies make voluntary commitments.

It had inspired hope that the Federal Government organised a comprehensive and participatory process to discuss possible contents of its national action plan. Apart from business associations, Germany's Trade Union Congress, the Human Rights Forum and VENRO, the umbrella organisation of developmental NGOs, were involved in the consultations. The draft text's low ambitions, however, prove that our hopes were probably misguided in a rather fundamental sense.

The final word has not been spoken. Federal Cabinet, led by Chancellor Angela Merkel, will take the ultimate decision in autumn. Apparently, the Finance Ministry is about to express its disagreement with the current draft. It is set to oppose the very concept of "human rights due diligence" and does not want to consider legal sanctions. Should such a view prevail in the end, Germany's action plan would become meaningless.

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Debate

Breaking Point

Most of Britain's South Asians wanted the UK to stay a EU member. Xenophobia and racism have been getting worse, and the migrant population now wonders what the future will hold. Most likely, extremist identity politics and religious fundamentalism will get a boost – in Europe as well as in Asia.

By Ceciel Shiraz Raj

At first, Saeeda Warsi, the former chair of the Conservative Party, supported the Vote Leave campaign in Britain's referendum on EU membership. She later changed her mind, but by then, Vote Leave had convinced 30% of Britain's South Asian voters. A large number of South Asians felt that the racial hatred which the Brexiteers were stirring up was limited to immigrants from Poland and other East European countries.

The truth, however, was that a crude mix of hideous attitudes was becoming evident – it included colonial supremacism, xenophobia, paranoia and racist hatred. What Brexiteers really wanted was freedom from diversity.

Yui Mok/empics/picture-alliance

Because of growing xenophobia, Saeeda Warsi, former chair of the Conservative Party, switched from Vote Leave to Remain during the referendum campaign.

Seventy percent of South Asian Brits had understood that all along. The signs had been obvious. Indian kids, for instance, knew that others in their age-group often claimed to smell curry near them, and Pakistanis were called "Pakis". The ghosts of earlier white supremacist organisations had been resurrected in the UK Independence Party and other Leave-promoting entities.

Making matters worse, South Asian communities remained ghettoised and estranged from eachother. Pakistanis, Indians, Bangladeshis, Nepali and Sri Lankans do not mix much in Britain, displaying their own brands of nationalistic arrogance, divisiveness and religious fundamentalism.

One week before the referendum, Jo Cox was killed. As a Labour member of parliament, she had campaigned for the Remain side. Her killer shouted "Britain First". So far, it looks as if he was not linked to the far-right group called Britain First. It has the habit of threatening prominent Muslims and has disrupted life at London's largest mosque. It runs "knife defence" camps in the Welsh mountains. The group only has a few hundred members, but almost 1.5 million likes on its Facebook page. Reportedly, there are 100 hate-based crimes every month, and people say the situation has become worse since the vote, though there are no solid statistics yet.

Governments, private-sector leaders and the media are now busy trying to calculate the economic fallouts of Brexit. Among foreign investors in Britain, Indians are the third biggest national group. Some 6,000 Indian doctors and 20,000 Indian nurses work for the National Health Service. Many other Indian professionals are high-earning accountants, lawyers and corporate managers. Will they still be welcome in post-Brexit UK? No one can say. Will the remittances that migrants send home to South Asia decrease? No one knows.

Britain is one of the most important foreign-trade partners for Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal and has served as these countries' patron saint in relations with the EU. London helped them get GSP plus status in relations, for instance. GSP stands for Generalised Scheme of Preferences, and duties are lower or cancelled for countries that have this status. Britain, so far, has also been a major donor of official development assistance (ODA). What will Britain's future ambitions be, and will its government still have international clout? No one can tell.

What looks obvious, however, is that Brexit will boost extremist attitudes and identity politics. Afzal Khan is of Pakistani origin and a British member of the European Parliament. He argues that Brexit is a bad sign for UK as a lighthouse of modernity and cultural diversity. Dinesh Bhattarai, a former Nepali ambassador to the UN, warns that the Brexit decision can boost the "confidence of radicals and fanatics" in his country and, more fundamentally, puts the "entire liberal order into question". Khaled Farooqi, a Pakistani journalist based in Brussels, reckons: "Brexit will embolden and strengthen all kinds of religious extremists and radicals of UK and Pakistan. It is their heavenly gift."

Ceciel Shiraz Raj

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Satellite images of mass graves

When collecting evidence for a case, human-rights organisations and prosecutors have begun to analyse data from satellites, the internet and mobile phones. Due to legal uncertainties, however, courts tend to be hesitant to use this kind of proof. Rules governing the use of digital evidence are overdue.

By Benjamin Dürr

Information gathered by a satellite orbiting the earth at an altitude of 45 kilometres confirmed the existence of a mass grave in Burundi. Amnesty International (AI) used the data to check local people's claims that bodies had been buried in the Buringa region. A comparison of images from November and December 2015 showed that large volumes of earth had been moved.

In the past, perpetrators often succeed in concealing the extent of their wrongdoing even in the case of mass crimes. They intimidate witnesses, forge evidence or prevent investigators from accessing the crime scene. Advanced technology can help solve such cases.

The use of such technology remains the exception in criminal proceedings however. The International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague and the UN tribunals still rely on traditional evidence, such as eyewitness testimonies or forensic investigations. The ICC in particular needs to admit a greater range of evidence, not least because witnesses can be unreliable. Their statements are sometimes vague, for instance when crimes occurred a long time ago, or simply untrue, which can be the result of intimidation or bribes.

Moreover, the ICC does not have its own police force, so it depends on cooperation with governments. That approach doesn't always work. Kenya, for example, has refused to hand over the requested documents in the case against President Uhuru Kenyatta. And Sudan no longer allows any ICC staff to enter the country. Investigators are thus unable to visit crime scenes in Darfur in order to build their case against President Omar al-Bashir and other suspected war criminals.

Because AI staff is also barred from traveling to Darfur, the human-rights organisation is using satellite images to document the destruction of villages and the movement of refugees for its project "Eyes on Darfur". Other organisations are using internet data. The Syria Justice and Accountability Centre (SJAC) has built an archive of a million internet videos from Syria. They could be used before court at some point in the future.

AA/picture-alliance

Personnel from the International Criminal Court are not allowed to collect evidence in Sudan. Refugee women work in a brickyard in the conflict region of Darfur.

Up-to-date software makes it possible to determine the direction of a missile strike by checking the position of the sun in images or by analysing thousands of hours of video footage. The software used by SJAC, for instance, fast indicate which videos in the archive feature a specific kind of tank.

The ICC is considering the relevance of this kind of evidence in theory, but it has barely relied on it so far. Legal uncertainties account in part for this restraint. There is a lack of precedents and rules on how to deal with digital evidence. Satellites, for instance, produce data that are only turned into images later. The original data would therefore not be presented in court; it would be used in a processed form, AI explained in a legal paper. Accordingly, they would normally be considered indirect evidence, which carries relatively little weight.

The authenticity of data would also have to be proved. According to AI, it is possible, but much more difficult to spot signs of manipulation in satellite images than it is in photos and videos. Courts need to take up this issue, set precedents and establish rules.

The UN Special Tribunal for Lebanon is performing pioneering work in this area. It is basing much of its case against those responsible for the 2005 assassination of Rafic Hariri, the former Lebanese prime minister, on a complex analysis of dozens of mobile phone numbers. The investigators have discovered patterns in the call records and want to use that information to prove how the assassination was carried out and by whom. Whether or not they succeed will only become clear in a couple of years once the judges issue a verdict.

Links

Amnesty International project "Eyes on Darfur":
http://www.eyesondarfur.org
Syria Justice and Accountability Centre:
https://syriaaccountability.org/

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Hard time to be president

Nigeria's economy is in a desperate state. Whether President Muhammadu Buhari will manage to turn things around, remains to be seen. In June, the national currency was unpegged from the dollar. The step shows that the government is aware of the challenges, but does not prove that it is up to them.

By Ibrahim Mohammed

According to official data, Nigeria's economy went into recession in this year's second quarter, contracting by 0.36 %. The downturn has several reasons. The most important one is the low oil price on world markets. Problems are compounded, however, by violent unrest having reduced oil production in the Delta region by about one third. Inflation has been rising. Consumer prices are rising fast and so is unemployment. Many people struggle to make ends meet.

The Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria's north-east is primarily an issue of security and politics, but it obviously has a bearing on the economy too. For one thing, it requires military attention and, implicitly, government funds.

Alamba/AP Photo/picture-alliance

Protest at rising prices in view of fuel-subsidy cuts in Nigeria.

For a long time, the Buhari administration seemed to be in a state of denial about the state of the economy. The president apparently hoped that it would be possible to lead the country out of the slump by clamping down on corruption on the one hand and letting the government play a commanding role in the economy on the other.

Buhari headed Nigeria's military government in the mid-1980s and declares himself to be a "converted democrat" now. Until recently, however, he had not backtracked from a 1980s approach to economic policies. Back then, leaders of former colonies basically believed that they could develop and diversify the economy by ordering companies what to do. A fixed exchange-rate, in this context, was a matter of pride.

Buhari won the presidential elections in 2015 because his campaign promises attracted many voters. He pledged to fight the all too common abuse of public office for private gains. Moreover, he said he would reclaim funds that had been lost to corruption.

Nigerians are fed up with living in poverty while a small elite siphons off the country's oil wealth. A little more than 60 % of the people were living in poverty at the beginning of this year, and that ratio has surely increased in the current economic crisis.

It adds to the problems that Nigeria's government must bring order to public finances. Last year, the president ordered the central bank to bail out 27 Nigerian states so they could pay outstanding salaries. The budgets of 36 states and almost 800 local governments have a tendency of sinking ever deeper into the red.

Buhari is an unlucky president in one important respect: he assumed office when the economy started to deteriorate. It was not his fault that the oil price slumped, but it radically restricts his policy options. Last year, Vice President Yemi Osinbajo said that the new government was inheriting the economy in its worst moment in history. Previous governments could rely on huge oil revenues, but the Buhari administration must cope in leaner times.

In a dramatic change of policy, Nigeria's central bank unpegged the naira, the national currency, from the dollar in June. Earlier, one dollar had officially cost 199 naira. Today, it costs 280 naira.

The new currency regime has important upsides:

- First of all, it means that Nigeria's foreign-exchange reserves are not depleted as fast as they were when the government guaranteed an excessive exchange rate. Indeed, it was beginning to run short of dollars.
- The black market in which currencies were traded has lost its relevance.
- Nigerian exports become cheaper, and that trend should stimulate the economy.

However, the new currency regime also has downsides. The most important is that imports are now more expensive, and consumer prices have risen even faster as a result. Moreover, Nigeria really has only one major export good: oil. It is traded globally, and the national exchange rate has little bearing on the world market. Therefore, the devaluation of the naira will probably not have a huge impact on exports.

Debate

Buhari has great policy aspirations. People believe he is serious about wanting to end corruption and quenching both the Boko Haram insurgency and the Delta crisis. If he cannot get a grip on the economy however, he will struggle to achieve anything at all. ←

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