

# **Local Knowledge and International Decision-Making in Development**

**Seminar memo of Researchers' and  
Practitioners' Network's meeting**

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# Introduction

This text is a documentation of Researchers' and Practitioners' Network meeting at Jyväskylä on 27th of March 2006. The network was formed in 2004; it is Kepa's initiative to increase cooperation between the researchers and practitioners active in the field of development issues.

The network meets twice a year and keeps contact through an e-mail list (to subscribe, send a message to [research-l-join@kepa.fi](mailto:research-l-join@kepa.fi)). The theme for the year 2005 was *impact assessment*. These discussions have been published in Finnish in a report called *Considering Impacts of Development* (KEPA's Report Series no 85). The English summary will be published in KEPA's Working Papers at the end of 2006.

The theme for the year 2006 is: *"How to value and take into account Southern experiences and visions in the national and international development policy decision-making"*. The first meeting was coordinated by the International Development Master's Programme of University of Jyväskylä. The second meeting in 2006 will be held in Tampere in cooperation with Department of Social Policy and Social Work (TY).

## Local Participation: Local and/or Global Disconnect

Professor Severine Rugumamu

Today I intend to discuss very briefly on what participatory development is and what it is perceived to be. I'm looking at participatory development in two ways:

1. As an analytical concept, which help us to analyse and understand how the society is organised
2. As a process, that it is a community engineering process seeking to attain development

But before I do that I start by trying to refresh your mind on what development is. And here I borrow Professor *Amartya Sen* of Harvard University who defines development

1. As a process of expanding freedoms that people enjoy: For example governmental freedom, political freedom and psychological freedom

2. And as something including participatory democratic governance of people's lives.

Professor Amartya Sen was reacting to the received dominant conventional economics that saw development mainly in terms of economic indicators; growth rate, per capita income and all these narrow definitions of development, and to political scientists looking at institutions ignoring the totality of the development. Professor Sen was concerned about how development takes place, particularly the development in the third world countries. He was concerned about the imposed policies. Most of the development policies that are implemented in the third world countries since the end of the Second World War are mainly imposed by the World Bank, IMF or by the donor communities. Sen is also concerned about the organisations through which the development takes place. The target of the development, the people, were hardly participated in framing what the development should be, in defining what the policy is, in identifying the resources, participating in the development process, and participating in evaluations and management of this process. And not surprisingly during those years of development aid, there was very little that could be put on the plate in terms of poverty reduction (poverty continued to increase), disease eradication and eradication of the general ignorance of the people. Only a few people managed to go through the education process, the rest remained illiterate. To Professor Sen this type of development was essentially exclusive, elitist and did not address the needs of the majority of population

The new thinking in participatory development included the idea of how to ensure that the beneficiaries of the development are themselves the masters of the process. So, other than being on the receiving end we have to make them the masters of this development process of expanding freedoms. This is formed in three assumptions:

1. The believe that citizens can be trusted to shape their own future (that they are the masters of their own development)
2. The existence of the institutions or organisations should be used to design the implementation and evaluation of the policies of the development
3. The local indigenous knowledge should be appropriated in these decision-making processes. What the people know and have

practised over time should be part in this designing of policies and projects that seek to empower and develop these people who are considered as excluded or marginalized

Above all, participatory development seeks to avoid the imposition of policy priorities from outside. If people, the citizens and beneficiaries of the development, have to be the masters of their own development then they should sit down to discuss and agree what should be done in order to empower them and expand their freedoms.

Then there are political conditions for effective participation. In order to effective participation to take place, there are three preconditions:

1. Citizens are adequately informed about the projects under consideration. The information made available is both adequate and relevant. It is provided well in advance so they are able to read, discuss and internalise it. And this information should be properly packed. For example if you are going to villages, people are semi-literate and information should be given in such a way that people are able to make sense out of it and the information can be used as a tool in their decision-making.
2. Peoples' representatives are democratically elected and accounted for the citizens. Those who represent the rest of the society should be elected not appointed to sit in the assemblies. So they are people's choices and they represent their views and opinions. And because they are elected leaders one expects that leaders will be accountable to the citizens who elected them to office. Citizens should also have the right to withdraw representatives in case of poor performance.
3. Institutions should be democratically engineered. People should agree on what kind of organisations they should have in order to get their voices heard, that is dialogue, discussions and decision-making that is uninterrupted by any power structure. These institutions should wake people up as a community so the decisions are community-based and therefore people are not afraid to make whatever proposition they want to make as long as it is a community decision.

Participation as a community engineering process can be put on a continuum between what is most desirable and ideal and what is least desirable. The least desirable participation

process is called participation through mobilisation. This is a participatory process, which is elitist in nature and focus. Policies, projects and programmes are designed from above, mainly from the headquarters of the state. At the local level local leaders mobilise citizens to participate in the implementations of these programmes just for providing labour. This is least desirable because it does not empower those people who are expected to be the beneficiaries of these development programs. At the local level where the implementation takes place individuals benefit unequally from these projects. For example in the water projects that were supported by SIDA, the decision-making was done at the regional level and attended to favour the more affluent individuals in the society: The water wells were normally closer to the people who had power and influence in the society and far away from the community people. This is an example of the power structure at the village level, and the people who are not involved in the decisions of how the water supplies should be located.

The second interpretation of effective participation is called decentralisation. Decentralisation is devolution of power. Here resources and decision-making is moved closer to the people and not taken from the people. Just like in mobilisation the decision tends to be elitist, that is sophisticated, complicated with numbers and frames, and all that stuff where people just come in as representatives to approve what has been designed for implementation at their level. Just like in mobilisation the power structure influences on how the goods are distributed. The poor, excluded and marginalized, hardly participate and those who participate are only defending their own interests. Decentralisation in participation process is like mobilisation; it fails the test of empowering the poor and excluded.

The ideal participatory development process is called empowerment. Here the power is given to the people. The organisations or the structures that are found on the ground are designed and planned to implement the development projects that are intended to help the marginalized people. Empowerment also means using the indigenous knowledge and capacities that are available on the ground. These indigenous structures of participation enable people in local level with the elected representatives to participate in the discussions about the development problems and resolving them. So the local people are able to determine which project they prefer and how

the resources should be mobilised internally and what is needed from outside. Because the people themselves are participating in designing the project also the issue of sustainability is easier to keep in mind. So the ideal is that the project is intended, managed and resourced internally and the village is the master of the process. Empowerment participation emphasises collective voice. Collective voice is something where people and their representatives put forward their wishes, needs and expectations, something that ultimately is called local decisions. And through the exercise of collective decision-making and democratic practises the people also learn the art of “winning some and losing some” in the negotiations process.

Unfortunately the development cooperation very seldom is a process of empowerment. It is not used to strengthen the organisational structures that are found on the ground, to appropriate indigenous knowledge, and it is not intended to empower the excluded and marginalized

## Commentary

Professor Liisa Laakso

I support your concept of empowering participation but I think it is also important to look at the general importance of this kind of participation to the society beyond any particular development programs and beyond any specific development aims. As you pointed out, it is important that the structures are democratic because that is what builds trust in societies; trust between people and trust between people and public authorities. There are a lot of comparative research done in the world, not only in the developing countries but also in the North, indicating that the more there are voluntary associations the more stable the democratic system is. So democracy and the accountability of the public authorities correlate with the number of voluntary associations and people's participation in these voluntary associations. The classic study in this kind of thinking is *Robert Putnam's* study on Italy where he lounded the concept of social capital. He discovered the emergence of trust and tolerance through the high level of participation in voluntary associations in Northern Italy. Whereas in Southern Italy there is no community based participatory structures, the public trust on authorities was very low, level of corruption high and therefore the authorities were not able to build a

democratic system. What I think is important to notice is that the concept of social capital doesn't only mean that people are connected with each other. In Southern Italy family relations are really important and people surely were connected but the relations were not based on this kind of voluntary grouping associations. So an environment that enables voluntary participation, that there are certain kinds of ethics and legal regulations for the associations, is what gives place to pluralistic democratic society. Pluralism and tolerance are not emerging from the fact that there are a lot of different kind of groups but what is important is that people can freely choose which group to join and they can participate in decision-making, lobbying and information gathering etc.

I think the way you described decentralisation refers more to a kind of government-led process where the government may really appoint the authorities to the local level and maybe even divides some districts and in the worst case this leads to a kind of patronage system. But decentralisation can also mean genuine delegation of power. In fact it might mean that the central state is loosing power more or less voluntarily. The crucial points in this system are that the people themselves can elect the responsible authorities, and democratic accountability. If the authorities are just appointed by the central state, the state decides how much money they can use and it is not empowering participation.

Then a few comments about the importance of participatory approach to the public authorities and state. What I have realised about the relations of civil society and the state in Africa is that since the state is often very weak the civil society can be an important actor actually empowering the state. NGO's can provide information to the state and the better the quality of this information is, the more difficult it is for the public authorities to ignore it. When research institutes or NGO advocacy workers are doing research that is politically relevant and delivering it to the public authorities it is very important to the state. In some specific policy areas provision of training is something where NGOs are really becoming important and recognised actors not only in the level of the state but even in the level of regional organisations. Practically all African regional organisations have their civil society forums, which are not only formalities but they do provide the kind of legal framework, which give voice to civil societies.

In addition to the role on providing good and accurate information to the public authorities the NGO's are also important because they have better access to the beneficiaries. There are several examples of sensitive areas, like domestic violence or aids victims, which are difficult for public authorities to deal with. The state is actually supporting civil society groups because of their ability to get access to certain vulnerable groups in the society. Another good example would be conflicts. There are a lot of non-governmental conflicts in Africa and also conflicts between government forces and rebel groups. For public authorities to interact with the groups that they see criminal or illegal is virtually impossible because interaction with these groups would mean their recognition. So the role of civil society groups in mediation and conflict resolution in these areas is very important.

## Comments and questions

*Cristal M.*: When I think about the concept of development in Professor Rugumamu's presentation and in general, I think that the whole process of development is given and that is why it is hard for the developing countries to really own the process. The whole concept of development is foreign. And if you are using democracy to achieve development it is a foreign tool. So I think we can participate in the process but never really own it, because the concept and the tool are foreign. And who are the people you are talking about in your presentation?

*Severine Rugumamu*: Professor Sen's concept of expanding freedoms, which includes economical, political, social and psychological freedoms, is so broad that there is nothing foreign in that sense in the concept of development. The totality of the development comes from the rubric of Professor Sen's definition. About who are the people; the people are right there in the villages and communities. As a program officer you are looking at districts, where the people, their assemblies, and their representatives are. People's geographical and political divisions are there, in the villages and in the districts. If the people are awake and mobilised enough, they'll know whether their representatives are representing them, just a section of their village, or individual interest as community interest. The most important thing is

to mobilise the people, so people know who they are and what their interests are.

*Cristal M.*: But how can we define development as freedom? Democracy in itself is a Western concept and if development is seen as freedom, why is it that the traditional healer in my village is not considered as developed kind of medical centre? Why is it that the traditional way of ruling has to be democratised in order to be developed? In Africa democracy is a process that is given to us and because it is a foreign structure the participatory aspect of democracy is not as effective as is in the developed world. It is not our own tool and we are not used to it.

*Severine Rugumamu*: I don't know how you conceptualise democracy if you say democracy is "foreign to us". Nobody owns the concept of democracy. The democracy in Finland is different from the democracy of Sweden and the way Swedes practise democracy differs from the way it is practised by the English. Still, the principles are the same. The importance of the tool is the rule of the people, that is democracy. Basically you are looking for how the plurality of voices turns to a voice. The people of Nigeria are choosing their representatives to express what the people want and need. The views of the people are taken to assembly, because democracy is the rule of the people by the people for the people. If you go to the United States their democratic system is different from the Finnish because of their different histories and traditions. In Africa the traditional rulers also take part in the parcel of the governance system just like the kings and queens are still parts of the ruling system in some European countries despite the democratic government. In Africa the traditional rulers mobilise people to do things that elected leaders cannot do: plant crops, harvest etc. They have their role as a traditional institution accepted by their society and they can work together with modern organisations. Modern institutions are needed in larger units than the village, like districts, regions, and the state. Democracy is about creating institutions where people's voices can be heard and be part of the plan or strategy of development.

*Marja-Liisa Swantz*: When we use English language we create the concept through the language. In Swahili there is a concept, which means 'to continue', and that is development. It has nothing to do with the foreign concept of the development;

it is how to continue with our lives. When I was visiting a village in Tanzania wearing the traditional dress one villager said, “ this is development” so they gave their own concept to it in the same way. People themselves define what they are doing, it is up to them but they are all part of the same process. They are not standing still but they are in the world and they cannot step out of that world. But I agree that there is a big pressure from outside to define these things. And the whole question we are talking about here is how to get rid of those development policies that are implemented from outside.

*Ahmad el Hassan:* Professor Rugumamu said that each country has its own traditions of democracy while each context of language has its own principles of how to understand development or sustainability or democracy, but how is it a participatory method then? If it is supposed to come from the people themselves, how are you going to take participatory development to Middle East for example? To them it makes no sense. They have never heard about these concepts of participatory development or democracy.

*Severine Rugumamu:* Not everybody has heard about the participatory development, but the process of empowering people is a common interest. In order for the people to realise what development is, they have to participate the process. People don't like anything to be imposed above; we want development to be grass root based development.

*Ahmad el Hassan:* Can you give me an example of this kind of development that goes from grass root upwards?

*Princewill Tafor:* I think in most cases the movement is actually bottom-up but the question is the leader. We need representatives and a leader to represent our interests.

*Severine Rugumamu:* One example is primary education. If people decide to finance and construct the primary schools in the village they are mobilising resources and participating to the process. Then they request the governance to support this construction work. This is participatory development. When the buildings are there people demand that government should take over and employ teachers, invest in books,

and bring facilities in the labs etc. This is an example of grass root development.

*Akbar D.:* Each one of us here can have our own interpretations about development according to the experiences, knowledge, and books. The same goes to democracy. If you are talking about development and talking to us here, I'm sure that everybody can be in the same position as you are and talk about development from his or her own perspective. I'm talking about the concept belonging to a nation. I mean this democracy is about who it belongs, Nigerian democracy can belong to the government of Nigeria but it does not necessarily belong to the people of Nigeria, because these concepts are being imposed and being presented to the people by their government. So generalising the concepts to the nations and to the people is one thing I don't understand. I think the key is that we keep talking about development as a concept but we somehow forget what we want to achieve with this development. What is this development in practise?

*Severine Rugumamu:* I gave the spectrum about different kinds of development methods from the extreme right to the extreme left. The extreme right was the elitist interpretation of what to do and it is a top-down model. It is something we see most of the time. But I also went to the extreme left to show you grassroots based participatory development, which is bottom-up. It depends on where you stand to understand the development. It depends on what you are looking for and what your position is. Just like democracy depends on what country you are going and who are the people you are talking to. People in the countryside have a different idea about democracy than the authorities. It is about interests (class-interests) of the people.

*Petri Lehtonen:* Definition of the concept of empowerment as desirable raises the question on how to do that in practise? Let's say that there is a community where the girls have no chance to go to school and then we Westerners are saying that the girl's education is the key to development. Then basically what we do is that we try to change the situation through the mobilisation of the community people and try to change their minds. But how this kind of project can be implemented through empowerment if that community doesn't accept this kind of idea in the beginning?

# Do they listen to us?

Professor Marja-Liisa Swantz

I will first go back to this general question of development and then answer to the question, which was brought up here: Is there any country, which is implementing participatory development? After that I will answer the question, what if people refuse to change and won't send girls to school. And I'm ending up to the question about do they listen to us? Basically it is all about these foreign actors in developing countries, what can we do about it that they would be less interfering and less dominating?

I think any of us who have started lecturing on development since the 60's have had to deal with this concept of development and the question: Is development something modern? Is it something that started in the 1900th century or is it something that comes from antique times or even before that. There are different theories and different interpretations of development as a concept. As *J.B. Bury* has written in his book *The Idea of Progress, an inquiry into its growth and origins*, the conscious pursuit for progress started in 1800, but others like *Robert Nisbet* trace it back to the Antiquity and beyond. We can't avoid the fact that we are in the global world and Finns like many other people struggle against the idea that we will lose our identities, our nation, our language, and everything that we have very bitterly fought for in our history. Now when the new generation is going to the global world, we have a lot of fear about this identity that we as a nation have gained and whether our own national development is going to be sacrificed on the global development. So, whatever our own ideas about development are, we cannot avoid the fact that we have to face this concept of development that comes from outside. This struggle is a struggle of all of us. I advise you to study the history of Finland and economic development of Finland because I think you become aware that in the Finnish history there is very much to learn for any developing country that is struggling in this global situation. We have a need to define our own history, identity, and our own way of life whether we call that right, freedom, democracy or something else. It is the struggle where we have to get our voices heard. The real question is at which level can this voice be heard?

I know Tanzania from colonial times on and have worked 53 years in the field there. I have experienced the people's voices in the colonial

time and really understood the lack of an African voice. Tanzania became independent when only a few district commissioners were Tanzanians. The whole government structure until the final years of independence struggle was in the hands of colonial officers, so in the hands of the Europeans. The nationalisation process was quick, probably a little too quick, because there were not enough educated people to take up those positions in the government in the 60's. Tanzania became independent 1961 and self-governing 1960. The first president (*Julius Nyerere*) had the same policy what we have now heard about participatory development. His point was that people's voices have to be heard and experts and leaders must not become the ones who determine the development. Also the Tanzanian National Union's politics were based on this method. Unfortunately the forthcoming leaders did not have the same vision about development and the implementation process was not put into practice as planned in the first place. In 1985 the retiring president said that he was sorry that the leaders before him did not understand or were not able to implement participatory development from bottom up like he had planned.

Participatory development came to fore through many influences. We started participatory development using participatory research in 1972. I believe that participatory development demands participatory research, it demands research where the researchers actually learn how to gain the ideas of the local people, the knowledge on which their everyday lives have been based on. I think if we only sit here in lecture halls we will never learn how to appropriate that knowledge. We actually have to have participation as a method in our research if we want to be concrete in our understanding of participatory development. If you are doing your higher degrees for example in America or here in Finland it's really difficult to do participatory research because you are so far from your research country and the experience of the local people. When I was in the Institute of Development Studies in Helsinki, we actually had Tanzanians doing fieldwork in Finnish villages. They needed interpreters but it was a very good experience because it became a learning process in both ways. What is most important in the participatory development is the actual concrete communication with the people. I lived five years in a village in Tanzania and I was actually sharing a house with an African family. I spent there nights and days, sat

through the rituals, and learned about the traditional healing. This is the basis to actually understand how people think and what their ideas are. For example when I asked in that village what do you think would be most important for your development, they answered that the most important thing would be a telephone. In the 70's nobody would have thought that you would have a telephone in the village and I didn't think it was a very clever idea but it didn't take long before I realised that they needed the phone to call an ambulance or to call to the nearest city and just to communicate with other people. Now we all understand that communication is absolutely crucial in development!

I was in a research project about dominating knowledge in WIDER-institute. We created a research program of dominating knowledge and edited two books, *Dominating Knowledge* and *Decolonising Knowledge*, together with *Frederique* and *Stephen Marglin*. They were based on the idea that the scientific knowledge always dominates the research and the questions are set from the point of view of the researcher. They do not arise from the actual problems that people have.

My article together with my daughter *Aili-Mari Tripp*, on fishing community in Tanzania is one example of ignoring the local people and their knowledge. In the midst of this fishing community there was a Norwegian fishing institute where they trained fishing officers. I asked from one of the graduating officers about their contacts with the local fishermen who were fishing everyday from the shore of institute. The man told me " We have had no contact with them, we learn things that go higher and higher and have nothing to do with fishermen". They had no concrete contact with the actual fishermen and the fishermen did not benefit from the research of the institute. Only after our research they started at least to sell some fishing equipments to fishermen. This is an example of using dominating knowledge. And this is why it is so important that we already while studying learn these concepts because you don't suddenly turn into a people-centred person.

Tanzania is one example of a country, which is actually implementing participatory development at the moment. All villages in the district where we are cooperating have made their development plans using participatory methods. In Tanzania we are very fortunate and this is the good result of the Nyerere's policies. All these villages

have their governments which are official governmental institutions and the legal decision making body is the village assembly. With these village assemblies villagers have legal rights over the land and over the issues concerning them. I doubt that any other country has this kind of a system. This means that all the villages have first made their development plans and then the representatives from different villages meet in World Development Committees and bring forward their propositions, which they can't implement by themselves. There is money coming directly to the villages, so they can build their own schools, apply for assistance from different places, and they are actually empowered do to things in their own way. There is of course some struggle with leaders who want different things than the people. But the village leaders are voted by the village assembly and the basis for developmental plans is made with participatory methods. So this system is implemented in Tanzania. When I moved to the countryside in Finland I was elected to the municipal council and I had these experiences from the villages in Tanzania about how your voice is heard and how you can actually make the decisions. And the fact is that also in Finland this council makes the decisions. I think our system is actually a local government system and it comes fairly far down.

If people don't want to change, they have defined their own ways to do things. I have a clear example of this from the Maasai who are cattle keepers in Tanzania. We had a five years participatory research project in this area and it was very much concentrated on the Maasai. The young leader of the Maasai said that they would never send the girls to school and there were also difficulties to get the boys to school because they were needed in herding the cattle. When I recently visited this same village I brought up this comment that they said in the 70's and they answered that actually all our girls go to school now. When we first came to the village to do participatory research there, the district officers asked our help because they were afraid to go to the Maasai villages. The officers had previously forced the boys to go to school and they had beaten the boys and of course the people resisted their visits, sometimes violently. When we took this participatory approach to the village and talked to the people we got along well and learned a lot. We learned about the logic behind the resistance and brought it to the decision makers and officers who didn't have the relevant information.

People themselves usually question things but we cannot tell them or force them to change because development is not something that comes from above but it should be something involving this kind of participatory process.

## Commentary

Researcher Pekka Virtanen

First of all one thing that professor Swantz brought up, that it is very important to put all these concepts like development or participation in a context. If we speak of them in a totally abstract form we usually lose track of what they could actually mean. I think that for example these concrete experiences from Tanzania prove how important it is to put the concepts in some context. The same applies to the observation that Cristal made in her previous comment about what is democracy. If we talk about democracy just as a standard structure of elections it probably is just a 'Western concept', which has little if any concrete application or real meaning. But if we take it as an idea of equal participation and try to implement it in the specific context, then there might be more to it. Concrete experience at the local level with the concrete problems and with the people living in the villages should be the basis of any development activities, and I think 'democracy' in this broad form is a good basis for development.

Here we were only discussing about development activities and co-operation in one specific country, but I see some a bit worrying trends in the present development co-operation policy, which is moving directly to sectoral support and direct budget support. I mean this in the sense that it puts more and more emphasis on the functioning of democratic structures of the co-operating partners. Of course, in the ideal situation that should be the ideal goal: it should be the governments of the co-operating countries that decide about the use of the funds. But then the question is the level of democracy in this kind of co-operation. Governments vary quite a lot in different countries, so how do we see that the funds and resources are used in the best possible way? For example, the Paris declaration principles call for doing all the co-operation with central government and state institutions. What if there is a capital leak like there often is? In most of these sectoral programmes and budget support, the allocations are supposedly done on the basis of poverty re-

duction strategies, but are they based on participatory methods? To what extent does for example the World Bank influence on donors and decide what is the main trend of development and the roles of the government and civil society in the counterpart country? These kinds of issues should be kept in mind when trying to answer the queries of the ordinary people. Who owns the poverty reduction strategies? I think that even from the government side mobilisation is a more common tradition than empowerment, so how do we change that?

Somebody has said that, historically, achievement of power on the central state level has been the result of economic power in most of the developed countries. In developing countries, however, the order has often been reversed, so that political power is the source of economic power. Even in Europe the people with economic power also have more governmental power, but in Africa the government officers are often the real beneficiaries of new economic opportunities.

And then I have one more issue, which is about the ideal situation versus reality. Nyerere and various other political leaders have already brought the ideals up in the 1960s. Most of the ideal level principles are not new. The problem has been, how to put them into practice. I have been recently doing some preparatory work on Guinea-Bissau, and some of you may know the work of Amilcar Cabral, who was one of the main political thinkers of Africa in the last century. And his ideals are very much like those of the current participatory approach. You can find most of the key issues in his teachings and writings. The actual development of Guinea-Bissau has, however, been rather sad. It is definitely not an example of participatory development, so the real challenge is how to put these nice ideas into practice.

## Comments and questions

*Yvonne:* I think that these things that we have been talking about today, about how to mobilise people or voice their opinions or use participatory methods I think it's a bit of a dilemma, because the focus is so much in the community level of development and not in the national level. I think it is easier for people to participate and have an effect on their communities than in higher levels. For example if we look at what is going on in Nigeria at the moment, our president and the

government want to act by themselves, which is constitutionally illegal. So, how the people in villages can voice their opinions? I think that people in the urban areas have a better chance of voicing their opinion because civil society organisations perform in those places. It is easier for NGOs to reach people in urban or semi-urban areas but not in the rural areas. And I think it's a bit difficult to find the tools that can be used to have people in these rural areas to voice their opinion about issues that are not just concerns of small communities. So, what tools can they use and how can we reach these people?

*Marja-Liisa Swantz:* If you can influence at the grass root level you can actually raise the voices of the people that they will not accept the kind of policy the state level prefers. All I can say is that it is important that the movements begin from below and get momentum. If you don't have good leaders on the top then the movements come from below.

*Yvonne:* But I feel that the movements are reaching people for example through the media, but people in rural area are still left out.

*Marja-Liisa Swantz:* This question is a big question on a global level. We have structures on a global level, which all press down the small people. That is why we are saying that there should be more general pressure from below up. The pressure should also come from other countries in Africa not just from the North. That is why we are in Kapa. Kapa is trying to get people's movements to influence our own development policy questions. So, ordinary people and their way of conceiving it differently should influence our own development policies. This is why we believe that the only way to get these movements going is from below inside the country or outside of it. And you people, the researchers are very important in it. We are not saying that the process is ideal and we are not saying that they are succeeding and getting all the people from the top to understand and not to make deals on the side. The general estimate is that the situation in Tanzania is improving and there is less corruption than before. I hope that with the new president we'll continue in this way but this is a struggle and a process, not something ideal, but there is a possibility that this pressure from below can have influence.

*Florence Kinya:* I think that the participation of the civil society is often challenged by the politics because it doesn't please the government. The idea is that civil society would be able to speak for the people and in most cases it is totally challenged. Sometimes NGOs have licence to do their work, sometimes not and sometimes they just have licence from some other country. And about the ideals, when I look at some time back when I walked in some very remote areas in Kenya, watching the division between a couple of villages in different locations, the people didn't have the basic necessities but I saw a very challenging atmosphere where the local member of parliament really had influence in there because he was trying to build on the capacity of this community. Not just mobilising them but creating some discontent that there is an ideal situation that lies out there and it is up to you to reach it for your own needs. I mean you have to be ready to push your way to get an idea about your own ideal. Often the challenge lies in the hands of some activists.

*Tafor Princewill:* I think we really have to contextualise this participation and we all are aware that not all the communities have the same level of participation. If we go out to a community where this community is not really participating, what kind of support can we expect? What should we do in such a situation?

*Marja-Liisa Swantz:* Let's think about my example about the officers who tried to force the boys to go to school. People have ways to sabotage things so we have to figure out what kind of a situation we as researchers are dealing with in development proposed by the government. I think it is these underlying logics that we have to work out. What are the reasons for not wanting to participate. The Maasai definitely had logical reasons why they behaved the way they did. But the government never asked why they don't want their kids to go to school? They would have answered that they need some pauses to school-days or -weeks and if this works out the kids can go to school. People have reasons why they do certain things and it takes time to find out them. In Tanzania the big mistake was the "villagisation" program. When people didn't move to new villages voluntarily the government ordered them to move. But the people who should move there had no idea what the new villages should be like. The government just implemented and lot of

bad things happened. There are cases where the government policy overrules and the local implementers cannot stand against the government, consequently they do things, which are harmful. After that they can't get people to participate because people feel it is totally wrong. What was the example case again?

*Tafor Princewill:* The case was about vaccination. The village leaders refused to get vaccinations to the villagers.

*Marja-Liisa Swantz:* I have a same kind of experience. In a village where we did some research was a vaccination program and the vaccination team used schools for vaccinations. There was a rumour in the village that this vaccination had caused death. So when the team came only the teacher's children were in school and everybody else had disappeared. We wanted to find out why and found that there really had been some bad instances. The fridge system had not worked in some villages so it actually had destroyed some of the vaccinations and there had been some accidents then concerning the people. This is an example that there are often quite clear reasons why people do what they do. There are some underlying reasons that have to be worked out and using force has never worked out in these situations.

*Severine Rugumamu:* I just wanted to add that often when people reject development interventions there is some information involved that is not correct or there is lack of information. The best way is to identify the gaps that are there and then carry out a special kind of program where you can tell the people about the advantages, disadvantages and the importance of that act. People also need time to discuss and decide because clearly it's impossible to force them.

*Marja-Liisa Swantz:* I just want to make one reference to the topic, which I was given and haven't said anything about. That was the question, "Do they listen to us?". I have a fresh example about this. The Finnish aid had a problem in Southern Tanzania, where Finland has worked for 30 years all together. I went to meet the Regional Commissioner who doesn't have the actual power to implement but his staff has a role to advice and gather information and he has political influence. I had a meeting with them and asked about problems I had heard they had with the Finns. The first thing they said to me was: "They

don't listen to us". When I told the ambassador that they feel we don't listen to them, he said we really listen to them all the time. But the Commissioner told me that the Finns had already the terms of reference ready when they came, which had been made in the Ministry in Finland. The Finns had presented those plans first and then they probably were going to listen to their hosts. The problem of these initiatives usually is that those who come from outside think that they have to have something to say and they come with their suggestions. I think in African culture it is even harder to say no, they wont just say no we can't accept this. This concept of development as aid, is why the whole thing is breaking down, because the communication between the "donor" culture and the "recipients" who are there to implement just don't meet. Now the donor's side is trying to avoid this kind of encounter and they put money on some sector or budgetfunding and then they don't need to worry about the encounter. I feel that after all these years of cooperation and discussion about these development questions, we have never been in such a dead end as we are now. So here is a good challenge to all of you.

*Severine Rugumamu:* In 1995 I found a book, which title was Lethal Aid, Aid that kills.

*Marja-Liisa Swantz:* So you think that it is still a question of power? There are a lot of good people in the development business and there are a lot of experts, people who have been in it for really long time and really want it to go well. And then there are new people coming along all the time and to them it is something fresh and they begin again with the same problems and same questions. Sometimes it seems that there is no continuity, and even if you have continuity the people have not gone deep enough to be concrete enough. These questions are very big and we are not going to solve them tonight.