



# DANISH DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH NETWORK (DDRN)

## Travel report

Reference: Holland\_26-28 February, 2008  
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### 1. Objectives for travel:

- To participate in the Conference: 'Knowledge on the move: research for development in a globalizing world' held in Den Hague, February 26-29, 2008
- To inform about DDRN and establish new contacts and links through informal networking

### 2. Background

AS participated in the Conference: 'Knowledge on the move: research for development in a globalizing world', February 26-29, 2008 upon invitation from the organisers and in her capacity as knowledge and research network coordinator/knowledge intermediary. The 120 participants attending the conference included researchers, representatives of research and higher education institutions, practitioners (civil society organizations), policy makers and donor agencies, mainly from the Netherlands and Nordic countries. The conference was organised by Institute of Social Science (ISS), Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research-WOTRO Science for Global Development (NOW) and Netherlands organisation for international cooperation in higher education (Nuffic).

The **objectives** of the conference were 1) to take stock of and reflect on past experiences and lessons learned, and on the changing contexts of research and international cooperation; 2) to reflect on the positioning of research for development and on enhancing research capacity in the context of systems of innovation; and 3) to contribute to bridging the gap between researchers, policy makers.

The **methodology** of the conference included keynote presentation and discussions in plenary and eight thematic workshops on each of three cross-cutting issues:

- Research Arenas: ***International Research partnerships***
- Research Practices: ***Embedding Research in society***
- Research Capacities: ***Capacity Building for relevant research.***

The coordinator participated in the workshop on Research Communication which focused on addressing the crosscutting issues from the point of view of the experiences and insights with regard to these specific themes.

All background ***documents and conference papers*** are available on the 'Knowledge on the move' website: <http://www.nuffic.nl/home/news-events/knowledge-on-the-move> The conference will result in a book comprising submitted papers, proceedings and conclusions, which will be announced on the DDRN website later when received. The plenary sessions were of varied quality but there were many good presentations and presenters.



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Against this background this report focuses on highlighting key messages from presentations and discussions in plenary and the thematic workshop on research communication for each of the crosscutting issues.

## **3. Outcomes and key messages arising from plenary sessions DAY ONE**

### **3.1 Research arenas: International Research Partnerships**

Luc Soete (Director United Nations University) gave a keynote speech on Research Partnerships in a historical perspective. Key messages from his presentation and plenary discussion include:

- Knowledge sharing has shifted from a purely technological issue to broader social issues
- It is no longer valid to only work within 'systems' (open innovation system with different partners)
- Inclusion of user groups essential for successful innovation (the role of NGOs key) and need to reverse the process, start bottom up with design
- The added advantage of partnerships should be made clearer
- Shift from research within national borders to research without borders (rapidly growing research communication with bigger networks – no frontiers)
- Partnerships are driven by internationalisation of access to knowledge
- Global sharing requires involvement of public and private sectors
- Science in development in European context (only) will not continue after Lisbon 2007
- Is there need for more integration than universities (especially European) are willing to at the moment? The change will probably not come from the universities, they need to be 'invited' and it needs NGOs and others to put pressures on universities
- Conceptual clarity is lacking and partnerships are highly diverse
- Northern dominance in N-S partnerships is strong
- Junior researchers from South should be given more attention
- A Win-win situation does not require symmetry
- We need to strive for excellence – in relevance!

### **3.2 Research Practices: Embedding Research in Society**

A keynote speech was delivered by Hoda Rashid (Director of Social Research Center at the American University in Cairo). The main message from this presentation was that

- Co-operation is not just about cost recovery but also about values, processes and design features (see also later on research practices).

### **3.3 Research Capacities: Capacity Building for Relevant Research**

Berit Olsson (Head of Department for Research Cooperation (SAREC) in SIDA emphasised the following issues and questions in another keynote address:

- Regional cooperation does not substitute national capacity
- There is need to move from donorship to ownership and to better understand what is a 'good research system'
- The extent to which the critical debate exists was questioned
- Research management is a key issue. Large vertical partnership programmes have sometimes failed because it was wrongly assumed that research management is there
- Long term investments in low-income Southern countries a key issue and you cannot have only one type of research (advocates for partnerships projects *and* local capacity building)



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## 4. Outcomes and key messages arising from workshop on Research Communication

About 25 people participated in the workshop on research communication, which was one out of 8 parallel thematic workshops. Participants represented donors, researchers, NGOs and knowledge intermediaries. Discussions were based on brief presentations and highlights in a background paper on research communication produced prior to the workshop by Nick Perkins and Geoff Barnard from IDS, Sussex. Main issues and questions discussed are summarized below.

### *Importance of defining, giving priority to and monitoring impact of research communication*

- Making knowledge work is a political process
- Communication is the environment within which communication takes place and not only the outputs
- There is little empirical evidence of the added value of better communication and of what works – need for more analysis and evidence
- Good research communication is just as important as good research management and communication not given the attention it should get

### *Ways of communication*

- Starting point: Every researcher should think about target and have a strategy for communication of his/her research
- There is need for innovative research communication and examples of how we get it into our research (examples were given on children researching their own leaning in Bolivia and participatory video research on violence in Brazil)
- We need to get out of the box from '*so what*' to '*so what to whom*'
- There is no 'one' model for communicating research, different stakeholders need different messages, e.g. policy briefs to ministries and parliament
- Partnerships with regard to research communication is not so much about think tanks, and researcher-researcher links as researcher-NGO links
- Dissemination of research requires new capacity building among journalists
- For science journalists and knowledge intermediaries it is important to know as what and how researchers and knowledge institutions, e.g. International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED), frame themselves. It is problematic and may cause confusion if it is unclear whether it is about research or advocacy

### *Donors' support to research communication and what needs to be done*

- The Netherlands Finances and believes it is important, but has no clear policy. It is not a well elaborated sector in Dutch development assistance
- Australia has just released a new research strategy that focuses on research communication through long term partnerships and a competitive fund. Three things which they ought to be doing were stressed. These are: 1) getting more and better connected with the ground; 2) incentivising researchers to communicate; and 3) advocating for increasing coordination among donors and other stakeholders and identify a simple way of knowing what we are all doing
- Switzerland is trying to define programmes and build up indicators so that they can judge proposals
- Canada addresses communication from the policy-makers point of view focusing on the following: How agendas are set, processes, negotiation of agendas, prepare and sensitise ministers to give good policies etc., give advise which is evidence and knowledge based
- UK put emphasis on the following: 1) allocates 10% of budgets for consortia partnerships for research communication – and guidelines are provided for researchers, 2) make results widely published, 3) focuses on research 'put into use', and 4)



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establishing an enabling environment. Issues that need further attention include the following: Researchers do not take communication seriously and the reasons why they do not take this seriously are not tackled (some were never asked, some cannot or will not do it, they are not incentivised for it except for publicizing in journals); communication should also be built into a system, - if it is not a system it will not happen. Finally, there is need to build capacity to communicate.

- Japan stresses the importance of data exchange and sharing data.

At the end of the workshop (and DAY ONE of the Conference) the most important messages from the presentations and discussions in plenary and the thematic workshop on research communication were entered into a matrix to be presented at plenary on the following day.

### **4. Outcomes and additional key messages arising from plenary and workshop sessions on DAY TWO**

#### **4.1 Partnerships**

- Southern ownership should be promoted while maintaining a strong Northern commitment
- The northern 'win' should be redefined to make partnership work
- Assessment of partnership by Southern partners tells another (less positive) story
- Diverse multi-stakeholder participation needed to get excellence in relevance
- More research into partnerships is needed (and carried out by South)
- The complexity of partnerships is high – "can be like entering a mine field"
- Partnerships should be long term, include (only) 3-4 partners and partners start with addressing the following questions: Why participation? What to offer? What is expected to come out of it?
- Better alignment of research partnership programmes among donors is needed
- Donors should be careful not to burden with a long list of 'other' conditions for partnerships and source supplier of money should not impose itself as the partner

#### **4.2 Research Practices**

- Embedding research in society is a value statement with diverse manifestations
- Knowledge enablers important, e.g. forums, spaces, communication, platforms. The players are not confined to research centres, but there are different knowledge producers and actors
- Scientific community needs to accept that there are different types of knowledge, e.g. local (traditional) knowledge
- Needed: spaces for learning from other experiences – regional, S-S, inter-regional
- Demand articulation needs space, time and effort and ranking needs should be contextual
- 'Policy makers' should not be narrowly defined (incl. grassroots churches etc.)
- Empowerment frameworks are needed for embedding knowledge (supplementing local/national environment, S & T addressing the needs of the poor, knowledge inhibitions/power relations, national strategies, space for accountability)
- Need for global partnerships and alliances

#### **4.3 Capacity Development**

- How to access the instruments from and by the South? Donors are not transparent and they are not easily accessed



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- Important to clarify where we want to go (new trends, technologies etc.) and how we get there (long term commitment from all sides, thematic approach, avoiding high transaction costs)
- What needs to be funded: research management systems of government
- Donors should engage in mapping, learning and pooling of resources
- Who should do it? (diversity of actors, regional structures to be better used)
- Look at country level – each country to define response and roles in consultation with beneficiaries, when we address who should look at authenticity, legitimacy and relevance
- Affinity to target not only to modality

### 5. Other outcomes: links, contacts and information

A number of useful contacts were made. Informal meetings were held with Jon Daane, Director of [ICRA](#), David Dickson, Director of SciDev: [www.scidev.net](http://www.scidev.net) and Tag McEntegart, Executive Director of International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP): [www.inasp.info](http://www.inasp.info)

### 6. Conclusions

The Conference with its large, diverse and active participation was a useful source of information and knowledge on current trends in Research for Development and the opportunities and challenges currently faced in 'Knowledge on the Move'. It also provided a good opportunity for networking with European and Southern colleagues and introducing DDRN to potential members and partners.

AS/ May 3, 2008