



Magazine

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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EDITORIAL

Rural Development: The key to tackle local hunger and poverty?



CLAIRE COVIAUX
EDITOR IN-CHIEF

Rural development is the process of life quality improvement and economic growth of rural populations in developing countries. It reduces local poverty and hunger by addressing many multi-sectoral needs including education, health, agriculture, and natural resources.

The concept first appeared in the 1992 UN Agenda 21 – Chapter 14. Its major influence in the international development frameworks and policies kept increasing over the years until its latest mention in the 2015 Sustainable Development Goal 2.



MARIA MALMSTEN
EDITOR IN-CHIEF

With 2.8 billion people worldwide living without energy services; more than 1 billion living without electricity; 16 percent of the rural population lacking drinking water access; 50 percent living without sanitation facilities; and 44 percent of births in rural areas carried out by non-healthcare professionals, rural development is key to solve these issues.

The 2030 Agenda reaffirmed the increasing severity of hunger and poverty issues, which must be addressed through sustainable agriculture, international cooperation, water and food security.

EDITORIAL

Claire Coviaux is a Master's student in Disaster Risk Management and Climate Change Adaptation (DRMCCA) at Lund University. Her main professional and academic areas are in Climate migrations, specifically in South-East Asia, and Humanitarian response to conflict and disaster.

Maria Malmsten graduated from Lund University with a Masters in Development Studies. Education, equality and sustainable development are topics she is enthusiastic about. Besides talking about these challenges, Maria enjoys nature walks and playing in parks with her two children

In this FUF Lund Magazine issue, agriculture and food production are addressed from different angles. The lack of knowledge in respect of nature and the discrimination against minorities have created great challenges such as poverty, hunger, deforestation, healthcare and education inequality and last but not least food loss and waste.

To solve these issues, rural areas need protection in cooperation with their local populations. In the meantime, laws and policies create sustainable agriculture while nurturing economic and social development.

Many decisions regarding the rural areas are made far away from those areas. However, the untold stories and the crucial knowledge are essential to create a future that is more just, equal and sustainable for all.

What are the challenges in rural development? What has to be changed? What kind of development is needed in the rural areas? This Rural Development Magazine issue answers these worldwide vital questions and raises awareness about this increasingly urgent topic.

Happy reading!

Claire Coviaux & Maria Malmsten

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Global agribusiness continues to displace rural communities



A news article by Sanna Honkaniemi

Photo: Zonc_Photos/Pixabay

Land grabs facilitated by multinational corporations, foreign investors and local governments in a pursuit for agribusiness have been escalating during the last decade. Huge acquisitions of farmland have led to violent displacements of rural populations. Although reports of the practice are not as recurrent in the media, the problem is far from over.

Between 2006 and 2016, 491 land grabs motivated by agriculture took place, amounting to 30 million hectares of land in 78 countries. The majority of where these land grabs happen are poor countries located in the global South. Although land grabbing received a lot more media attention in the early 2010s, the phenomenon has not disappeared.

According to an investigation by GRAIN, a recent example can be found in Kiryandongo, Uganda where three foreign multinational companies, with support from the Ugandan government, have facilitated violent land grabs leading to the displacement of thousands of families.

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Before their lands were taken, the locals farmed a variety of vegetables and fruit and kept animals. Now, the agribusiness companies have replaced the diverse farmlands with maize, coffee, sugarcane and soya, all of which is being exported elsewhere. One of the companies is also producing cereal for the United Nations World Food Programme whilst the local communities now suffer from hunger and malnutrition.

Many of the locals have had no other option than to start working for the very companies responsible for their displacement. Receiving inhumanely low wages and having to endure poor conditions the workers are also suffering physically from the heavy use of agrochemicals. Those who speak out about the vast injustices are being silenced through violent actions taken by company security forces and Ugandan officials.

Events like the ones taking place in Kiryandongo have not been rare during the past few decades. Multinational corporations, foreign investors and local governments are continuously putting profits before the livelihoods and rights of rural populations.

Resistance and mobilisation towards land grabs is increasingly growing on a global scale with social movements working together to question the power of corporations and governments.

The most famous movement is perhaps La Via Campesina, bringing together rural communities, agricultural farmers and indigenous populations to fight for the rights of smallholder farmers in an era of neoliberal globalisation.

Thanks to years of activism work by the movement, the UN General Assembly adopted the 'United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Peasants and Other People Working in Rural Areas' in 2018, giving hope for the future of rural livelihoods.

Whilst land grabbing is not a new phenomenon, it became globally known after 2008 when the global food crisis led to a rush for farmland. Governments and multinational corporations were looking to produce food and biofuels due to both a fear of food insecurity and an increased desire for profits.

Land grabs are defined as the acquisitions of land by investors from smallholder farmers or rural communities. Often smallholder farmers and rural populations that communally utilise land do not have legal ownership over the lands their families might have been farming on for generations.

This land is then falsely viewed by investors as empty excess lands that can be sold to them by local governments seeking profits. Those living or farming on these lands receive little to no compensation for their forced evacuations.



Resistance and mobilisation towards land grabs is increasingly growing on a global scale with social movements working together to question the power of corporations and governments.



Sanna Honkaniemi

Sanna is pursuing a Master's in Development Studies at Lund University. She is particularly interested in inequalities within the global political economy and social justice issues.



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EU moves toward tra

A news article by Aarne Hakomäki



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& Stefanie Scharmann

On 27 January 2021, the Legal Affairs Committee of the European Parliament (EP) adopted a draft for a European supply chain law. The draft proposes strict regulations of the environmental standards and human rights within the value chains of companies.

The European supply chain act will require all companies operating within the European Union (EU) to practice due diligence in their supply chains. It is expected that this will have a positive impact on rural development by reducing the negative impacts of European companies' activities on human rights and the environment.

The current laws within the European Union concerning supply chain due diligence differ across countries. Some countries, like Germany and the Netherlands, have established their own due diligence laws aiming to reach the United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGP). However, most countries still rely on voluntary measures by companies.

A survey study carried out by the European Commission on companies operating in the EU finds that supply chain supervision has increased. Over a third of the companies surveyed followed due diligence based on the UNGPs.

However, a majority only follow due diligence through the first-tier supplier, and not through the whole value chain.

A unified legal framework is expected to increase the quality and scope of human rights management, and to create a level playing field across the common market. It would be binding for all companies accessing the internal market of the EU. Companies would comply with their due diligence obligation and eliminate negative impacts on the environment and human rights. Sanctions could be imposed in the case of violations and legal assistance shall be provided to victims in third countries. Moreover, products related to child or forced labour would be banned.



By the efficient enforcement measures, support for affected rural populations would be possible.

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With such a European supply chain law, a positive effect on rural development in countries that are part of the supply chain can be expected. As Anna Cavazzini and Heidi Hautala, Members of the EP stated, the due diligence includes the impact of companies on the environment and climate change.

Thus, rural populations would be less exposed to the consequences of environmental destruction. For instance, land grabbing for food cultivation would be banned. The respect of property rights achieved would also strengthen the human rights situation. By the efficient enforcement measures, support for affected rural populations would be possible.

It is now up to the European Commission to propose a law that ensures the guarantee of human rights and environmental standards within the supply chains of companies. Until the expected law is finally implemented in the Member States and takes effect it may take some time.

However, Member of the EP Lara Wolters emphasises that the supply chain law is a decisive step towards responsible action in the globalised world and a chance to improve the living conditions of affected rural populations.



Stefanie Scharmann

Stefanie is a master's student in European Affairs at Lund University. She is highly interested in policy-making of the European Union, human rights, and development cooperation.

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Aarne Hakomäki



Migrant agricultural workers in Italy are being exploited

A news article by Sofus Malte Rønberg & Chiara D'Agni

The agricultural sector in Southern Italy depends heavily on foreign labour forces coming from other EU member states or third countries. However, seasonal agricultural workers are more likely to experience violations of their rights. This is in order to reduce the producers' wage costs as well as the prices charged to consumers in many countries including the Nordics.

Agriculture in Southern Italy heavily relies on undeclared work. In 2019, an estimated 59 percent of the agriculture work was conducted without a regular employment contract, the majority of which was performed by foreigners. The lack of legal recognition makes violations of workers' rights easier. Overall, around 37 percent of the workforce in Italian agriculture is composed of foreigners. Despite minor differences depending on the years, foreign labour force in Italian agriculture mainly come from Eastern Europe (Romania, Albania, Poland, Bulgaria, Macedonia), Northern Africa (Morocco, Tunisia), India and Senegal.

The importance of foreign labour force for Italian agriculture has become evident during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, when limitations to individual mobility have significantly reduced the flux of foreign agricultural workers to Italy.

There is also a growing connection between the Mafia and the agricultural sector, the "agromafia". In Southern Italy, a large part of the organisation of agricultural labour is characterised by the so-called "capolarato": members of gangs act as intermediaries between employers and workers, including foreigners.

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A report issued in 2020 by the Osservatorio Placido Rizzotto identifies 180.000 workers as vulnerable and subjected to exploitation and “capolarato”. These gang members use illicit or violent methods and control completely workers' lives, from their arrival in Italy, to their wages and housing.

Osservatorio Placido Rizzotto and Oxfam report that violations of migrant workers' rights range from incredibly low wages, exhausting working shifts and unsafe working environments; to episodes of violence and racism. Migrant workers in Southern Italy are forced to live in poor conditions, such as tent cities or slums with no heating or running water. Women are victims of sexual harassment and violence. The situation has only worsened under the corona pandemic, where migrant workers are exceptionally exposed to infection and do not have access to health care.

An international system of exploitation

The problem of migrant workers' exploitation cannot be isolated to Italy as the goods are being distributed to other European countries. According to Oxfam, amongst these are Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, Sweden and the UK. The agricultural exploitation in Southern Italy allows low-cost goods to be exported abroad successfully: fresh and canned tomatoes, oranges, strawberries, grapes, melons, watermelons and olives. In 2017, Danwatch, a Danish investigative media, documented how Danish supermarkets sell canned tomatoes from areas in Southern Italy, where migrants are working under “slave-like conditions”.

Migrant workers' rights are thus tied to the chains of production and affected by markets around Europe. Their rights and working conditions are interlinked with an international system, where companies' interests can outweigh fair working conditions. Their exploitation is not isolated to Italy - the exploitation is tied to global markets.



Chiara D'Agni

Chiara is as well a Human Rights student at Lund University. She comes from Italy and she has a broad interest in social justice, gender equality and LGBTQI* rights.

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Sofus Malte Rønberg

The Global Repercussion of Farmer Protests in India

A news article by Anne Eliassen Theys

Photo: commons.wikimedia.org

Since November 2020, thousands of Indian farmers protested on the streets of New Delhi against Prime Minister Modi's agricultural reforms. Despite the fact that the government opposes international interference, this seemingly local matter has international consequences.

Since November, thousands of farmers have encamped outside the Indian capital of New Delhi, as a sign of protest against Prime Minister Modi's reforms on farming laws. The reforms include the removal of guaranteed minimum prices for agricultural products, with the purpose of further liberalising the country's economy. While farmers claim that removal of state protection will open the doors to large private investors that will decrease the prices of local products, Modi advocates that it will support the country's economy.

As international celebrities like Greta Thundberg or Rihanna manifested their support for the farmers, the Indian government accused them of promoting "neither accurate nor responsible" information and warned that the country will not tolerate any kind of international interference in Indian affairs.

Although this has become a matter of sovereignty to Modi, the ongoing demonstrations will, in the long run, impact the rest of the world.

It Will Affect Supermarkets and Clothing Stores

India is the world's larger producer, consumer and exporter of spices. According to the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the country is responsible for 68 percent of the spices on the world market. These range from pepper, chili, ginger, turmeric, coriander, cumin, garlic, curry powder and fennel, to the cardamom essential for Swedish cinnamon buns.

On top of that, India ranks as the second largest producer of rice, wheat, cereals, fruits and vegetables behind China, and the world's largest milk producer. according to India's Agricultural & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority.

Most of these products come from the states of Punjab, Haryana and Delhi, where the protests are taking place. As the farmers advocate that they will not stop protesting until Modi changes his mind, supermarkets around the world will have to find alternative producers to fulfill the demand of their customers.



Anne Eliassen Theys

Anne Eliassen Theys is currently doing her Master's in Development Studies at Lund University. She is particularly interested in rural-urban inequalities, food security and frugal development.

All the more, according to the United States Department of Agriculture, 40 percent of the world's cotton comes from India. This means that the probability of possessing a piece of clothing "made in India" is rather high.

However, a cotton deficit will have the effect of increasing its price, and with it the one of its derivative products. Therefore, this protest that is taking place on the other side of the world may have heavy consequences on the cost of many clothing items sold in Europe.

In a globalised economy, strikes in the agricultural sector abroad can therefore have major impacts on a global scale. Although Modi wishes that the farmers' protest remains an internal issue, its impact will be felt all over the world, from Sweden to China.



In a globalised economy, strikes in the agricultural sector abroad can therefore have major impacts on a global scale



Photo: Micky Schepers, Farm to Feed

The paradox of food waste and hunger

Featured Reportage by Maria Malmsten

Photo: Farm to Feed

The paradox of hunger, food loss and waste is a global issue. All around the world, a third of all produced food never reaches the consumer. Claire van Enk has created Farm to Feed Kenya to bring about change in these issues, while striving for a healthier planet.

Nearly 50 percent of Kenyan vegetables and fruit never make it to the market. Meanwhile, a third of the population suffers from food insecurity or poor nutrition. As Covid-19 started spreading and restrictions such as lockdowns were implemented, farmers faced major logistical challenges. They struggled to sell their harvest and were stuck with more excess product. Furthermore, the unemployment rate increased, pushing more people into food insecurity. Many Kenyans do not have government-provided safety nets nor the financial savings to survive such a crisis. Many rely on agriculture, as it is 26 percent of the Gross National Produce (GDP).

To make a difference, Claire van Enk founded Farm to Feed in the midst of the Covid-19 crisis. Van Enk was raised in Kenya and returned after living abroad. She partnered with SNV, Netherlands Development Organization, which assisted Farm to Feed with logistical support.

-Things are born in crisis, people are more willing to help with fundraising. Covid was a catalyser for me to act and connect the farmers with hungry people, she reflects.

Hunger and malnutrition as a norm

26 percent of the children under age five in Kenya are stunted, meaning that due to chronic malnutrition, they are cognitively and physically impaired. This causes many health challenges later in life. Malnutrition creates a vicious poverty cycle as it affects learning and labor productivity.

-Malnutrition is rampant in Kenya, something transformational has to happen. There is so much food out there, we need to make it more affordable, van Enk explains.

People rely on their daily pay, and in many cases, approximately one third of people in Kenya spend up to 75 percent of their salary to purchase food, as opposed to only 10 % in some countries in Europe.

-When most of your income goes to buying food, you do not have a lot of flexibility. Making food a bit cheaper is essential for individuals and families to help them get out of poverty, van Enk concludes.

Additionally, poor dietary diversity and low nutrient intake among the low-income households are key contributors to malnutrition. For many children, the school meal is the only meal of the day. Farm to Feed is working towards increasing children's nutrition levels through school feeding programs.



Besides providing nutrients to people with food insecurity and income to farmers, Farm to Feed also reduces food waste, which reduces greenhouse gases emissions.

Income to farmers

Farmers are in a challenging and vulnerable position. If their crops fail, do not meet the market standards, or do not even make it to the market, they are out of income. In contrast, one third of the global food production never reaches customers. Farm to Feed creates opportunities to sell the harvests that do not meet these requirements, but are still edible for at least two days. They sell the crops at a discounted price for institutions through feeding programs, and donate to vulnerable groups.



If you really want to make an impact, decreasing your food waste is one of the cheapest ways to combat climate change.

The farmers will then receive an income for the harvest that would have been thrown to waste, and the people who lack meals receive nutritious food.

Reducing food waste to fight climate change

Besides providing nutrients to people with food insecurity and income to farmers, *Farm to Feed* also reduces food waste, which reduces greenhouse gases emissions. Van Enken explains that their work thus has a triple impact. Preventing food loss and waste reduces the loss of valuable resources such as water, energy, land and capital.

– Eight percent of greenhouse gases come from food loss and food waste. If you really want to make an impact, decreasing your food waste is one of the cheapest ways to combat climate change, she explains.

Farm to Feed aims to do more in the future, on a larger scale, to help more farmers, people with food insecurity and the climate. They wish to use this model in other locations to have a greater impact, by connecting the post-harvest with the people who need it.

Hunger has grown across the world during the current pandemic. Van Enk reflects that food aid is important and needed. However, providing possibilities for the local farmers to feed people in their own countries is a more sustainable solution. This is one of the ways to target the paradox of food loss and waste, and hunger at the same time.

Maria Malmsten

Maria Malmsten graduated from Lund University with a Masters in Development Studies. Education, equality and sustainable development are topics she is enthusiastic about. Besides talking about these challenges, Maria enjoys nature walks and playing in parks with her two children.



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A Successful Story of Regional Revitalisation in Taiwan

A reportage by Yi-Chia Chen

Regional revitalisation is a concept originated from Japan in 2012. Since Taiwan is facing similar problems as Japan, the Taiwanese government also decides to adopt this concept to attract people to move to rural areas. Instead of focusing on redevelopment, revitalisation comes to play an important role.

Regional revitalisation is a national strategy in Japan to curb population imbalances and develop rural areas, including reviving rural economic activity. In order to do this, the Japanese government encourages people to move from cities to rural areas. Moreover, Japanese towns and municipalities are bringing forward unique ideas to solve their problems by rediscovering their own specialties and strengths. It also states clearly in the Regional Revitalisation Law that there are three main aspects to work on:

1. Providing support for local governments' projects.
2. Establishing a tax incentive for corporations to donate to local revitalisation projects conducted by local governments.
3. Building an "active lifetime town" system with a strong focus where middle-aged and elderly people can lead a healthy and active life.

Similarly, Taiwan is facing problems regarding reduction in total population, ageing and low birth rate, overcrowding in large cities and imbalances of urban and rural development. As a result, the Taiwanese government turned its attention to rural development as it declared 2019 as Taiwan's Regional Revitalisation Year.

It also positioned regional revitalisation as its national security policy. In the National Strategic Plan for Regional Revitalisation the Taiwanese government bases its development strategy on three main focuses: "human-centred approach," "industries with local DNA," and "introducing technologies".

Revitalisation vs. redevelopment

Is regional revitalisation different from the former development policy in Taiwan that focused on community development initiatives?

According to Taiwan's former national development council minister Mei-Ling Chen's words in an interview, the answer is yes.

- Setting private-sector development efforts to one side, regional revitalisation is clearly different because the government is now explicitly focusing on the use of business creation and economic benefits to energise communities, mentions the former minister Mei-Ling.

In other words, the new revitalisation efforts are built on a business model and aim to support the scaling-up of local enterprises. Instead of emphasising business development by fostering local business or creating jobs, the old community development programs only focused on unifying communities, forging consensus, and solidarity.



The new revitalisation efforts are built on a business model and aim to support the scaling-up of local enterprises.

A successful story of regional revitalisation

Could regional revitalisation really succeed in reviving rural economics? To answer this question, it is worth looking at the story of the entrepreneur Pei-Jun Ho.

He began his journey in Zhushan, a small town located in Nantou that was destroyed in 1999 by a 7.3 earthquake, one of the deadliest earthquakes in Taiwan's history. While other young people moved from the small town to big cities to seek plentiful resources, he and a group of like-minded friends decided to move to Zhushan. In the small city of Zhushan, they renovated an abandoned house and turned it into a boutique bed and breakfast (B&B).

Pei-Jun established the Townway Cultural and Creative Corporation in order to encourage more tourists to visit Zhushan and help them understand the place better. With the aim to promote the value of local culture, he has collaborated with other local businesses to use bamboo to transform the unused second floor of a bus station into a food court. He even created menus full of Zhushan's local specialties. In return, there are 100,000 visitors, compared to almost none before, who come to see Zhushan every year.

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Recognising the growing aging population and rural-to-urban migration among young people, Pei-Jun also encourages young people to stay in Zhushan and to create their own businesses.

Whoever has new ideas for Townway Cultural and Creative Corporation can stay in its belonging accommodation in exchange for skills. One after another, young people have started coming to the town and bringing new technology to the local community. He thereby creates possibilities for both local residents and young people to start businesses. In this way, he does not only preserve cultural heritage but also adds value to Zhushan.

Although Pei-Jun started his business in Zhushan before the concept of regional revitalisation was presented, his successful story tells that it is not a dream to revive rural economics.



Instead of emphasising business development by fostering local business or creating jobs, the old community development programs only focused on unifying communities, forging consensus, and solidarity.

Since regional revitalisation now is listed as one of the national policies, there are even more chances to create stories like Pei-Jun's.



Yi-Chia Chen

Yi-Chia is from Taiwan and studying a Master's Programme in Human Rights Studies at Lund University. She likes to explore the Global South, therefore she chose to spend her third semester in Egypt despite the pandemic.





Agroecology is redefining rural development in Latin America

Reportage by Julian Dannefjord

Since 2006, Instituto Agroecológico Latinoamericano, IALA, has trained campesinos, small-scale farmers, in agroecology in Latin America through popular education. This institution plays an important role in resisting industrial agriculture all over the region and provides a different perspective on rural development.

Ever since the so-called Green Revolution in the 1950's, industrial agriculture has been influential in Latin America. This large-scale agricultural model has traditionally been hailed as a road to development. However, it has been increasingly criticized due to its large climate footprint as well as its social consequences, such as land concentration and wide use of pesticides.

But there are more sustainable alternatives to this model: one such is agroecology, which is taught around the region by the Pan-American initiative IALA, Instituto Agroecológico Latinoamericano. In the IALA schools, campesinos are prepared for a life of both caring for the land as well as organizing for a different world.

IALA was first started in Venezuela in 2006 by the country's late President Hugo Chávez to aid social movements in resistance against corporate agriculture. It is run by the national member organizations of the global small farmer network La Vía Campesina. The main goals of La Vía Campesina are to achieve distributive land reforms, fight genetically modified organisms (GMO) and establish food sovereignty by practicing agroecology.

Agroecology is a radical framework for practicing organic, small-scale agriculture. The agroecological approach touches upon more than just the farming itself; political, social, scientific, and practical aspects are also included.



Photo: Julian Dannefford

It is politically significant as it draws on issues such as participatory, agricultural traditions as well as new innovations. Agroecology is thoroughly holistic in its view of nature.

Food sovereignty, however, is the right of peoples to define their own systems of food production – in contrast to the current global food system.

The concept upholds the right to healthy and culturally relevant food that is produced by sustainable and organic methods. Food sovereignty can be viewed as a way of democratizing food production. It is additionally often claimed by La Vía Campesina that “small farmers cool the earth”, meaning that their agroecological model is an effective way to combat climate change.

I briefly visited the IALA Guaraní in Nueva Italia in the rural outskirts of Asunción, Paraguay back in late March 2017. What I witnessed was a deeply coherent environment, where everything was done collectively, through a schedule of shared responsibilities. That night, a *noche cultural* was held at the school, where after a whole day of classes the students organized cultural activities and cooked a big dinner together. Living together was clearly an important part of studying at this school – relating to how practicing agroecology is not only seen as a production model, but also as a collective political movement and a way of life. All around hung colorful flags of La Vía Campesina’s member organizations, such as the Landless Workers Movement (MST) of Brazil and Organization de Lucha por la Tierra (OLT) of Paraguay.

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In the main room, there was a big painting depicting campesinos protesting while airplanes fumigated their villages with pesticides. IALA was expressed as “part of a bigger resistance movement” against a neoliberal agricultural model that only benefits the few on the expense of the many.

In Paraguay, a quite evident example, genetically modified soy monocultures have in recent decades expanded dramatically in the country’s rural areas. These fields often resemble green seas reaching beyond the horizon, and the crops are exported mainly to Europe and China as animal feed for meat industries.

This has led to an extreme concentration of land, meanwhile there are thousands of landless campesinos. Therefore, for the sake of their livelihoods, campesinos are forced to mobilize. The popular education of IALA plays an important role in forming social leaders for this mobilization.

In the IALA schools, agroecological ideas are put into practice every day, and the

founding of IALA enabled agroecology to become a degree for campesinos. Each class studies for five years at the schools, combining theoretical knowledge and political education with collective practice.

This process has contributed to connecting many campesinos all over the region and formed them into activists through this grass-roots participatory education. Since the founding in Venezuela, IALA schools have also been established in Brazil, Paraguay, Argentina, Nicaragua, Colombia, and Ecuador.

Latin America’s rural problems are evidently political, economic, and social. One of the most crucial questions within rural development is the access to land, which is especially noticeable in Latin America.

If the traditional model for development is not sustainable, one might need to look for alternatives. IALA and the theory and practice of agroecology provides an alternative way forward, towards a different form of rural development.



Julian Dannefjord

Julian Dannefjord studies Political Science at Lund University. He has previously taken courses in Human Rights, studied Spanish in Cuba and conducted an internship in Paraguay. Latin America is the region closest to his heart.

More can be done to reduce food waste

An analysis by Alexandru Mocanu

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is calling for halving the global food waste. Although high-income economies are generally assumed to display more wasteful patterns, food waste hits the Global South the hardest.

Today, an estimated one third of all food is wasted. The World Resource Institute argues that developing countries may experience higher food waste because of poor infrastructure addressing the issue. Also, The Organization of Islamic Cooperation claims that due to marketing, food waste starts at supermarkets rather than at home. Considering recent supermarket expansion in the developing world, there is certainly a role for them beyond mere food access and availability.

Typical approaches to food waste reduction at retail level include improved cold storage, consumer campaigns, redistribution to grocery outlets, donations to food banks, etc. These solutions may need adjustment to the developing context. It has been argued that campaigns do not benefit food-insecure people as much as targeted redistribution. Without completely discarding campaigns, supermarkets can educate consumers on date coding.

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An estimated 20 percent of good food is wasted because of confusion around expiration dates, due to the variety of terms used such as “best before”, “sell by”, “eat by”, “expires on”, and many more.

A relevant recommendation would be using simplified wording in which the language is adapted to the regional context.

Another approach involves food banks, which are widely present in Latin America but almost absent in Africa and South-East Asia. Food banks can be a valuable business-to-business solution in managing supermarket waste and associated costs. Apart from just donating the unmarketable food, supermarkets can also provide financial and logistical support to food banks’ operations and thus take on more social responsibility role in addressing food insecurity.

Indeed, given its complexity, the food waste issue cannot be tackled alone. Therefore, supermarkets have a role in seeking collaborations across a wider range of actors, including businesses along their own supply chains and governments through public-private partnerships.

This is relevant especially for the stability dimension of food security, where private businesses are seen as critical partners in sharing data on their planned food supplies, available food in stocks, their storage capacities, and input for price stability.

Worth mentioning are also the various innovative solutions that supermarkets can come up with or adhere to. Examples include food redistribution apps such as “Olio” working worldwide or “No Food Waste” in India, used by businesses and consumers alike.



Alexandru Mocanu

Alexandru Mocanu is a graduate student of International Development and Management at Lund University. With a professional background in law, he is currently exploring the interlinkages between human rights, justice, and sustainable development.

The Need for Small-Scale Rural Renewable Energy Projects in Development

An analysis by Ian Granit

With the increasing focus on decarbonizing the world's energy systems, it is easy to forget that approximately a billion people worldwide live without access to electricity. Without it, clean water, transport, education, and many more aspects of everyday life become inaccessible.

Most people who lack electricity live in rural areas, often in off-grid locations that lack essential infrastructure and technology to provide energy from the grid. The current pandemic has caused lockdowns and social distancing restrictions that have made energy-poor people's lives harder than ever before, since it limits their ability to participate in education and livelihood supporting activities.

One main issue with rural electrification is connecting households with regular power grids. However, with solar and wind



To eliminate energy poverty, and provide essential services to rural communities, renewable rural electrification is essential.

energy, the possibility of creating stand-alone mini grids has become greener and easier than ever before.

One of the most important parts of rural renewable energy projects is focusing on long-lasting social structures. In Central America, community-based rural electrification projects, when owned, operated, or maintained by a community, have overcome past problems with rural electrification, while creating increasing interest and acceptance of renewables.



One of the most important parts of rural renewable energy projects is focusing on long-lasting social structures.

The increased access to clean energy better enables local communities to support their livelihoods. Also, it can help improve access to important services such as online education, especially important during pandemic times.

However, rural renewable energy projects are often seen as secondary activities compared to large-scale renewable energy projects that can fill industries' energy needs or be sold on the energy market, and therefore be more profitable.

To eliminate energy poverty, and provide essential services to rural communities, renewable rural electrification is essential.

Although it might not be as profitable as large-scale renewable energy parks, it will ensure that the most marginalized people, especially during the pandemic, will get a much-needed clean energy source to help support their livelihoods.



Ian Granit

Ian Granit is a Masters student in International Development and Management at Lund University with a passion for climate action.



Bridging the Rural Literacy Divide

A chronicle by Larissa Lachmann & Emily Elderfield

Living in rural areas can hugely affect children's chances of completing education; UNICEF estimates that children in rural areas are more than twice as likely to not attend school compared to their urban peers. Luckily, travelling libraries are one way to ensure that people can enjoy reading, regardless of where they live.

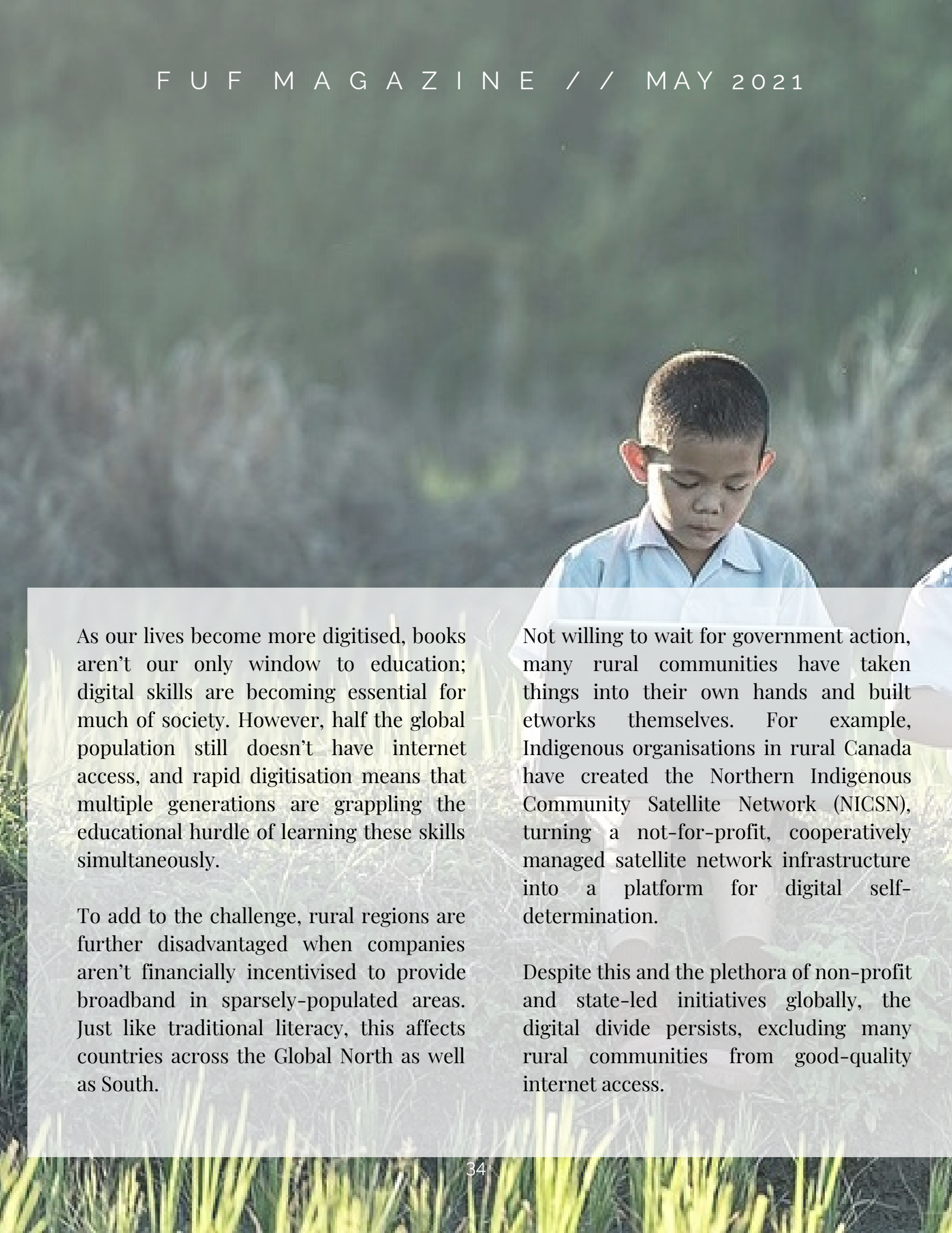
Biblioburro (library-donkey) in Colombia is one such example. Set up by Luis Soriano, a teacher who was concerned that his students had no access to books outside of school, it uses the help of Alfa and Beto, Biblioburro's donkeys, to bring books to children's doorsteps and ensure their love of reading can flourish.

Of course, a travelling library doesn't make up for structural failings in education systems. Countries in the global North and South alike face huge public spending cuts, low salaries and a squeeze on educational investment, which increases pressure on school systems.

Despite these challenges, simply securing access to books has been shown to correlate with better literacy rates for both children and adults. Furthermore, books are a magnifying glass into a country's cultural fabric, fostering important creative and analytical skills about the world around us.



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As our lives become more digitised, books aren't our only window to education; digital skills are becoming essential for much of society. However, half the global population still doesn't have internet access, and rapid digitisation means that multiple generations are grappling the educational hurdle of learning these skills simultaneously.

To add to the challenge, rural regions are further disadvantaged when companies aren't financially incentivised to provide broadband in sparsely-populated areas. Just like traditional literacy, this affects countries across the Global North as well as South.

Not willing to wait for government action, many rural communities have taken things into their own hands and built networks themselves. For example, Indigenous organisations in rural Canada have created the Northern Indigenous Community Satellite Network (NICSN), turning a not-for-profit, cooperatively managed satellite network infrastructure into a platform for digital self-determination.

Despite this and the plethora of non-profit and state-led initiatives globally, the digital divide persists, excluding many rural communities from good-quality internet access.

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Though the first step to digital literacy is computer and internet access, learning good computer skills is equally essential. One entry point might be increasing resourcing for rural libraries, which can offer meeting points, computer access and the internet to a wide range of people who

would otherwise lack physical and financial access.

Might we soon be seeing donkeys carrying Wi-Fi hubs alongside books? If the success of Alfa and Beto are any indication, that isn't such an outlandish idea.



Larissa Lachmann & Emily Elderfield

Larissa and Emily are studying the Master's Programmes in International Development & Management (LUMID) and Sustainability Science (LUMES). Emily's development interests include reproductive justice and gender equity in vulnerable healthcare settings. Larissa is currently exploring creative ways to save our planet and to make great pottery (clearly the harder part).



Photo: Julianne Hazlewood

Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities struggle for visibility and justice in Ecuador

An interview by Eleonora Moen & Leni Lindemann

Palm oil companies are detrimentally impacting rural livelihoods and biodiversity in northwestern Ecuador by extracting resources and polluting ancestral lands and rivers. Indigenous and Afro-descendant communities are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and health hazards posed by these companies. As an act of resistance, the communities, supported by the organisation Roots & Routes IC, have filed the world's first constitutionally-based Rights of Nature Lawsuit to demand justice.

The Chocó rainforest in the northwestern Ecuadorian Pacific region and Esmeraldas Province is among the world's biodiversity hotspots. Despite its ecological significance, the region is severely impoverished, violent, crisis-ridden and often invisibilized by outsiders. The lack of attention allows extractive industries to exploit both people and the environment, causing vast land and forest degradation, uprooting. African-ecuadorian communities from their rural homes and causing migration to urban centers.



Photo: Julianne Hazlewood

Julianne Hazlewood

They freely dump chemicals and waste into the La Chiquita river, polluting the ecosystem and river. This severely affects the livelihoods, health and food security of the communities which inhabit the region, the Indigenous Awá community of Guadualito and the Afro-descendant community of La Chiquita.

The lack of responsibility taken by the palm oil industry lead to the communities filing the world's first constitutionally-based Rights of Nature lawsuit which demands that the industries repair damages to the communities and environment. The Ecuadorian constitution, which was ratified in September 2008, recognises the Rights of Nature, which upholds the rights of all living beings of nature to be recognised as subjects of rights.

The international, US-based organisation Roots & Routes IC works with Indigenous and other ancestral and place-based communities as they stand up for their rights. FUF Lund Magazine interviewed co-founder and executive director Julianne Hazlewood to discuss the current challenges the above-mentioned

communities face, as well as the significance of the Rights of Nature lawsuit. These communities first filed a civil suit in 2010 in the Esmeraldas Provincial Court demanding repair and damages to the river and to all beings, human and nonhuman, that inhabit the river basin.



The lack of attention allows extractive industries to exploit both people and the environment, causing vast land and forest degradation, uprooting African-ecuadorian communities from their rural homes and causing migration to urban centers.

– *Despite being the first lawsuit of its kind, the lack of international attention and visibility severely hindered its success. After a seven year long struggle the regional judge ruled only partially in favor of the communities. It was ruled that the oil palm companies would share responsibility with 12 regional ministries, thus sending the communities into a labyrinth of bureaucracy,* Hazlewood explains.

As a result, the companies continue to dump chemical waste into the riverine ecosystems and the struggles of the communities continue. Julianne Hazlewood elaborates on what measures the organisation and the international community should take to show solidarity and support.

Currently, they are in conversations with Ecuador's constitutional-level Rights of Nature mechanism to present a parallel

“Action of Protection” alongside Ecuadorian, Dr. Ximena Ron, as the lead lawyer and Brazilian, Dr. Flavia Carlet, as a legal advisor. This is a much faster process and would ensure a higher level of visibility and accountability.

– *It is remarkable how the people who have lived through a historically and present day abandoned place can be the very first to call for a paradigm shift – their ways of knowing should be acknowledged and is what started this revolutionary political movement,* Hazlewood reflects.

Hazlewood concludes by stating that it is vital that organisations join their network. This is to both economically sustain the mission, and to ensure that all humans and Nature are treated with the compassion, respect and dignity that they merit.

Leni Lindemann

Leni Lindemann is a graduate student of Development Studies at Lund University. With a background in social anthropology and international relations, she has a broad interest in sustainable development and environmental justice.



Eleonora Moen

Eleonora Moen has a Global Studies background and is currently a graduate student of Development Studies at Lund University. Her main areas of interest are sustainable development, environmental justice and social justice issues.





How NGOs work with organic agriculture and community development

An interview by Klara Bengtsson

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FUF Lund Magazine has interviewed Birgitta Göransson Liste, the chairperson of the Swallows India Bangladesh to hear about work, civil society and the role of rural- and community development. The organisation has been working with rural development in India and Bangladesh for the last 60 years. One area of focus has been small-scale organic agriculture.

Birgitta started her experience in India as a volunteer in India in the 1970s. India has changed a lot since then. Today, 50 percent of the population in India live in the countryside. People are facing different challenges including such as access to land, and poverty. But how can you then work for people in the countryside?

According to Birgitta, it is important to work from the village level and with local democracy. It is also important to listen to the local farmers. It is also the question of gaining a livelihood and having a roof over your head and control over your life.

Birgitta also says that the work of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) changes over time, but that the values stay the same. Crucial to development is the local perspective, and to work with different thematic areas such as organic agriculture.

She says that there are various aspects to think about, one aspect is power-relations. In the 1970s the Indian government viewed organic agriculture as anti-social and a crime. This was because India had signed agreements with the US and different agribusiness companies. This was also a time when the green revolution with hybrid seeds, fertilizers and pesticides took place. It resulted in monocultures and had consequences for people and the environment. With the green revolution, local seeds developed over generations got to a large extent replaced with hybrid seeds. But there has also been a counter-movement. Today organic agriculture is more accepted.

Birgitta adds that seeds are crucial for organic agriculture because seeds are adapted to the local context and that the Swallows has collected seeds and created local seed banks. But seeds in themselves are not enough.

– There is also a need for training in organic agriculture. You cannot leave seeds in a corner, you need to think one step ahead, says Birgitta.

Other important aspects are long-term projects and being able to prove the effectiveness of the work. Birgitta brings up the work of the NGO Kudumbam, its charismatic founders and changes over time. Kudumbam has worked with training in organic agriculture, farmers field schools and different methods for sustainability.



Crucial to development is the local perspective, and to work with different thematic areas.

Birgitta says organizations like Kudumbam are successful since they are not only working in project cycles of 4 or 5 years but building trust, and not leaving in hard times, but to listen to the local people.

To end the interview FUF-Lund asks Birgitta how one can understand the recent farmers' protests.

– There is a lot of frustration on the local level because of the change of climate, both environmental and societal. It is also about politics in general. People can get robbed of their power, it is the powerlessness that people act upon, Birgitta concludes.



Klara Bengtsson

Klara is a first-year student in the LUMID-programme at Lund University. She has a bachelor's degree in Human Rights and has previously carried out an internship in India.



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The Ignorance of Indigenous Needs



An interview by Alice Castenson & Julia Mühlhauser

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The effects of climate change endanger humans all over the world. Nonetheless, indigenous people - who contributed the least - are doubled affected. As countries are increasingly implementing adaptation strategies, renewable energy is often raised as the solution - with large projects being constructed in rural areas. This however overlooks the interests of indigenous peoples living in these areas.

According to the United Nation, indigenous peoples are those who lived in a place before colonisation, with social and cultural similarities. Indigenous peoples live across 70 countries and represent 5 % of the world's population. However, they also represent $\frac{1}{3}$ of the world's rural poor. The UN reports that climate change exacerbates marginalisation, discrimination and unemployment towards indigenous groups. Moreover, the traditional lands of indigenous communities are among the most vulnerable to climate change effects and account for much of the remaining biological and ecosystem diversity in the world. These issues are intensified by the implementation of development projects, including energy infrastructure, in rural areas. While this may lead to opportunities for rural communities, it also poses the challenges to indigenous communities.



Worldwide, indigenous peoples face similar challenges, including discrimination, exclusion from political decision-making and marginalisation. At the same time, they have traditional knowledge and assets valuable to address global sustainability problems.

This is a global issue for both high- and low-income countries. When it comes to the aftermath of rural development projects, indigenous peoples around the world face very similar challenges. The Saami, Europe's only indigenous people, are heavily affected. We therefore talked to Åsa Larsson Blind, vice-president of the Saami Council, a non-governmental indigenous organisation bringing together different Saami organisations to support their rights.

We talked to Åsa Larsson Blind about the influence rural development projects have on indigenous peoples' livelihoods.

Indigenous challenges in Sweden and in the world

The Saami culture, identity and traditional husbandries stretch back thousands of years. The area in which they live is called Sápmi, located in the northern part of the Arctic and expanding over Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia. Due to the geographical and cultural diversity there is not one Saami population, and different parts face different issues and influences. The diversity of indigenous groups is the first take-home message Åsa Larsson Blind conveys to us.

In the parts of Sápmi located within Swedish state territory, an estimated 2500-3000 people depend on reindeer husbandry for their livelihoods. These groups are highly affected by landscape changes caused by development projects. For example, water and land changes have disrupted previous reindeer migration routes and availability of grazing land, Åsa Larsson Blind explains.

Yet, the Saami experience is not unique. Worldwide, indigenous peoples face

similar challenges, including discrimination, exclusion from political decision-making and marginalisation. At the same time, they have traditional knowledge and assets valuable to address global sustainability problems.

Despite international pressures to protect indigenous rights, Sweden is one of the countries to not yet take its full responsibility for Saami rights and livelihoods. Åsa tells us that there is not a structured way of consulting the Saami in national strategic and policy discussions in Sweden. To cope with the effects of changes in the landscape, there are no other options for reindeer herders than to adapt. However, such strategies come with costs, often at the expense of reindeer herders themselves. Rural industrial development in Sápmi is unproportional, and we cannot be expected to pay with our future and culture for Sweden to be able meet its climate goals, Åsa Larsson Blind says, highlighting the issue of climate justice facing planned mining developments in Sápmi.

"It all comes down to human rights". Indigenous needs must be addressed more in international and national climate strategies.



A future outlook

In all this, there is hope for the future. Åsa Larsson Blind believes education about the Saami and reindeer herding is key. “The children of today are growing up to be

company leaders, politicians or municipality employees. They cannot take Saami rights into consideration if they do not know about it”, she ends.



Alice Castensson

Alice is a Master's student in International Development and Management at Lund University. She is currently writing her master's thesis on trade-offs in multifunctional landscapes in Zambia.

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