

## **Panel AA: African NGOs for development: roles and North-South connections (chair/coordinator: Tiina Kontinen)**

### **1) Tiina Kontinen (University of Helsinki): Community of inquiry in evaluation activities - Space for African NGOs?**

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have achieved an important role in the international development architecture since the early 1990s. With the increasing funding and the growing number of different NGOs engaged in development the demands for showing effectiveness and impacts have also become louder. Evaluation and impact assessment have become an every-day activity to NGOs, in North as well in Africa. Accountability demands from the donors are important motives for such activities. However, the idea of self-reflection and learning are present as well. My paper explores the evaluation and assessment activities of NGOs as potential learning spaces. As the reinterpretation of Deweyan concept of community of inquiry in administrative studies suggests, the evaluation as its best is a democratic process making use of the principles of joint inquiry. The collaboration relationships of NGOs cross the geographical North-South divide. However, the conceptual divide consisting, for example, of colonial and development legacy might be even harder to overcome. The paper consist of conceptual reflection of the idea of community of inquiry in the context of evaluation, and especially, from the perspective of Tanzanian NGOs.

### **2) Anu Palomäki (University of Helsinki): Basic Income Grant proposal in Namibia: Challenges and Opportunities**

A Coalition comprising of a number of churches and non-governmental organizations is proposing a basic income grant (BIG) to be executed in Namibia. The proposal includes offering a hundred-dollar monthly income to every citizen not eligible for state pension. This paper will argue that despite its efforts, the Coalition has not been successful in lobbying for the idea of basic income in Namibia. This is due to several reasons relating both to the structure of the Namibian society as well as to the structure of the Basic Income Grant Coalition. The study will concentrate on the BIG Coalition, and evaluate the work from three different perspectives: from the official viewpoint, from an outsider perspective, and thirdly from a critical viewpoint. The paper contributes to the wider discussion of development cooperation and development projects. Following the argumentation of David Mosse and others it will be argued that this development intervention has a complex political background, and the results should be discussed cautiously

### **3) Guillaume Labreque (McGill Institute for Health and Social Policy, Montreal): Collective actors or individualized citizens? A case study on the influence of NGOs on youth civic participation in Mali**

This case study examines the relationship between youth and civic participation in Mali. In the last decade non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have proliferated in the Malian landscape in response to the incapacity of the government to address challenges related to development and, more specifically, to provide adequate job opportunities for young university graduates. While some have argued that youth in Africa have an “unpromising political role” (Cruise O'Brien, 1996, p. 55), others recognize the capacity of youth to deal with the multiplicity of challenges they face every day. In Mali specifically, research “suggests that prevailing social and economic conditions are responsible for marginalizing youth” (Brenner, 1994, p. 3). Drawing on research conducted by Cornwall (Cornwall, 2002,

2004; Cornwall & Coelho, 2007a, 2007b), I conceptualize participation as a spatial practice while aiming to determine how NGOs in Mali create, support and/or eliminate the spaces available for youth, from 18 to 35 years old, to participate (economically, socially and/or politically) in their communities. Through this case study, the following three conclusions were reached. First, despite the fact that NGOs are frequently present in Bamako, NGOs are more likely than the state to facilitate the creation of space for the civic participation of youth. Second, the quality of space for participation provided by NGOs is intrinsically influenced by Western donor priorities. This prevents some NGOs from delivering programs on their own terms. Finally, this study shows that NGOs in Mali, rather than being considered collective actors which defend the rights of citizens and implement development initiatives, are better characterized as groups of individual citizens, a structure that is supported by the “development enterprise.” In other words, rather than working to alleviate poverty while addressing the structural causes of “under-development,” NGOs in Mali are more likely to support just a select group of individuals in accessing their rights as citizens. Furthermore, those who are left out of projects implemented by NGOs are often subsequently seen as second class citizens.