



Video notes

DSA Ireland Annual Conference 2016

"Beyond Aid? Innovative Models for Social Justice"

1. Introduction: **Dr. Tina Wallace** (Oxford University, Trócaire) on "**Development as Dignity**"

2. Opening Keynote Address, and Interview

"Time to listen. Time to speak out" - **Jonathan Glennie**, Director, Ipsos MORI

Don't depend on 'grand theories' for development. Two things that we do know work in development aid projects are support for small farming and participation/ownership... "Power never concedes without a struggle." NGOs should stick to what they do, not service delivery.

3. Second Keynote Address

"The Sustainable Development Goals, Refugees, and Higher Education" - **Susan McMonagle**, Protection Assistant, UNCHR Ireland

The link between development studies, and migration and refugee issues. The New York Declaration, and the need for further education for refugees.

4. Invited Speaker

"Why social movements matter for achieving social justice" - **Dr. Leandro Vergara Camus**, SOAS, University of London

"Development is struggle." We must oppose capitalist development which is a source of problems. There is a need for NGOs to have autonomy from government. Development should be from the bottom up. NGOs cannot be apolitical, they are part of the society they're working in. "Bring back the political in development." We can't talk about development without talking about neo-liberalism. What is neo-liberalism? There was political involvement of NGOs in social movements in the 80s and 90s, BUT less monitoring. Funding has become the problem - it limits autonomy. Struggle was more about changing everyday lives. "Civil society = social movements plus NGOs." There has been an evolution of different understandings of development such as 'alternative development', 'autonomous development', and so on. "You don't 'bring' development to people, you bring about the conditions." 'Empowerment' became a powerful concept: "development is about taking control of our lives." Zapatistas and the MST (*Movimento dos Trabalhadores Rurais Sem Terra*, Brazil): these movements pursue a non-capitalist model of society i.e. not mediated by money. MST is more pragmatic, works with the government, focuses on politicisation and empowerment of workers, and is an example of organisations generating development from within themselves. Are NGOs ready to go back to having more of a political role?

5. Education:

“A review of a Higher Education Collaboration” - Paddy Reilly, Kimmage Development Studies Centre

Kimmage DSC/Tanzania educational partnership. Programmes over the period including BA. Was the partnership effective? A qualified yes: 94% of its graduates are working in the development sector. It is about good partnership (Eyben). A critique of partnership - an absence of financial relationship helped, it was open-ended, there wasn't a limit on time. Also, an example from Vietnam: mutual support, different cultures and ways of working.

6. Plenary Roundtable:

'Beyond Aid? What Options?'

Dr Lorna Gold (Trócaire) introduces the panel - **Dr. Leandro Vergara Camus**, SOAS; **Suzanne Keatinge** (Dóchas CEO); **Dr. Abdul Ilal** (independent consultant, Mozambique); **Dr. Salam Said**, University of Bremen, Germany; **Dr. Tina Wallace**, Trócaire and University of Oxford.

SK - whether NGOs should go back to a political activism role? There is a need for professionalisation, this costs money. These are neo-liberalism's successes. A collective voice, NGOs need to compromise and come up with three key messages, to get smart to challenge that power...

AI - dignity and inclusiveness are important. It should be cooperation and not just aid.

LVC – The State is a reflection of the balance of power in society. Neoliberalism changes the rules of the game. We don't necessarily have to play the game, we can create a new discourse. Mobilisation is so important, NGOs need to organise to be part of that.

SK - need to be "sitting at the table to change the system".

LVC - sometimes it's about kicking that table.

TW – Need to get real with humanitarian aid, much of it is not that impressive. Local people could deliver it at a fraction of the cost. We must have humility, doubt, and dignity in how to bring about “positive change” which is what development is about. We're losing our autonomy being funded by government. . NGO staff today don't have a political practice to draw on, that's the problem with 'professionalising' - development is seen as just a job. NGOs will go back to being value-driven organisations.

From the floor: need to clarify what we mean by social justice?

AI and SS – on social justice question

TW - NGOs are not asking themselves the difficult questions, it is not a reflective sector. Do