Like a Frog in a Well: Out of the Darkness and into the Light
Information Sharing Practices of NGOs in Cambodia

By Lynne Rudasill, Global Studies Librarian

Cambodia conjures up different images for different people. For some, there is the vision of the temples at Angkor Wat, for some the killing fields, still others are reminded of the operations in the Parrot’s Beak in 1970, yet others see the beaches of Sihanoukville. One of the most striking things one would see driving through the cities and small towns of the country today are the numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that have set up shop. Where else would you find an entire section of the local phone book devoted to these organizations? An umbrella organization in Phnom Penh creates directories for both local NGOs and international NGOs and the list for each numbers in the hundreds.

The ways in which these organizations deal with information — producing it, collecting it, and disseminating it — presents an interesting area for research in library and information science. Despite the assumption, by students and scholars alike, that everything is on the web, we know this is not even near the truth. The digital divide, lack of resources, and often lack of expertise precludes the possibility of web access in developing countries or at least makes it much more difficult.

Even in developed nations, the body of literature produced by NGOs is massive and, like an iceberg, only the top levels are visible to the unaided eye. This grey literature includes items such as technical reports, white papers, working papers and briefs and other

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What’s New at CGS

New Offices and New Address

The Center for Global Studies will be moving to new offices in the International Studies Building in mid-November. We will be sharing the halls with the other National Resource Centers for Area Studies and look forward to even more opportunities for collaboration as a result of closer proximity to colleagues.

Our new address is:
Center for Global Studies
303 International Studies Bldg.
910 S. Fifth Street, MC-402
Champaign, IL 61820

Save the Date!
Visit our new offices at our Annual Open House!
Friday, December 12, 4:00—7:00pm

New Design for Website

Over the past four years, the website of the Center for Global Studies has grown exponentially. It serves as a repository of archived faculty publications, videos and power-points of guest lecturers, and information about workshops, and events organized and supported by CGS. One of our highest priorities as an NRC is to provide inter-connectivity and linkages to information resources on global studies. However, rapid advancements in technology outpaced our original database management software.

Later this fall, we will launch a new version of our website. It will have a familiar look and feel, but a better organizational structure, and a more robust ability to manage the wide diversity of content. Our choice of software is Drupal, an open-source database system. OJC Technologies provided the new web design and technology training. The work of reorganizing the site has been a collective endeavor by CGS staff, but the hard work of importing and massaging content fell to Brent Fegley and Paolo Gujilde, our graduate assistants.

Global Studies Library—
Your Window to the World

The Global Studies Virtual Library encompasses materials related to globalization and global studies. Resources include books, journals, and documents that address the world’s peoples as a unit of analysis and social concern. Here you can also find links to relevant NGOs, the United Nations, and other intergovernmental organizations, as well as academic programs in global studies.

Lynne Rudasill, the Global Studies Librarian, is the liaison on campus for any faculty member, staff or student interested in furthering research or teaching endeavors in the area of global studies. Funding for the library is from the University Library and the Center for Global Studies. http://www.library.uiuc.edu/cgs/

Become a CGS Fan on Facebook

The Center for Global Studies expands its virtual presence in the world with a Facebook page. Paolo Gujilde, CGS graduate assistant, loaded the page with information about events, photographs, and links to resources about CGS programs and initiatives. Videos of workshops about biofuels and other international issues will be uploaded soon. You don’t need an account to visit our Facebook page: http://www.facebook.com/pages/Center-for-Global-Studies/30915807765. Become a CGS fan!

CGS Granted NGO Status from the Department of Public Information of the United Nations

The United Nations Department of Public Information (UN/DPI) recently approved the application of CGS as an associated non-governmental organization (NGO). CGS joins approximately fifteen other colleges and universities in the U.S. that are accredited as NGOs through the UN/DPI.

As an associated NGO, CGS is entitled to bring delegates to observe open meetings at the UN, attend departmental briefings, and participate in conferences and workshops organized throughout the year. For information about events organized and resources available through the NGO section of DPI, please visit their website: http://www.un.org/dip/ngosection/htm

As an NGO affiliate to the UN/DPI, CGS will help disseminate information about activities of the UN and issues of global concern. We also will provide links on our website to relevant print, audio and video materials available from the UN and the NGO section.

Faculty and students interested in learning more about opportunities available to visit and work with the UN as a result of our association with the UN/DPI should contact CGS Outreach Coordinator, Karen Hewitt, khewitt@illinois.edu, 217-244-0288.
Global Studies Graduate Education
Continued from front page

the Sophia University Graduate School of Global Studies in cooperation with the Global Studies Consortium.

On the first day of the symposium, plenary sessions addressed the concept of global studies in graduate education, global studies as an academic field, and area studies and global studies. The final event of the day was a “micropresentation” session on global studies graduate programs.

The goal of this session was to stimulate thinking about global studies, and to promote and inform symposium participants about the programs at our respective universities. The presentations were delivered in a new cultural form known as “pecha kucha.” To avoid death by powerpoint, the fast-paced format is as follows: 20 slides are shown at 20 seconds apiece so each presentation is 6 minutes and 40 seconds exactly. It proved to be a lively and informative exchange of information.

Among the presentations, the Global Studies in Education Online Masters Program at Illinois was unique. It was the only Master of Education program, as well as the only program offered completely online, creating a transnational space for enrolled students living all over the world who participate in classes in synchronous real time.

Day two consisted of three curriculum sessions and the inaugural business meeting of the Global Studies Consortium. Sessions highlighted upcoming programs, networking opportunities in the field of global studies, and job markets for graduates. The business meeting, attended by representatives from participating universities, had several goals: formalizing the statement of purpose and clarifying the mission of the Global Studies Consortium, soliciting formal affiliation letters of member institutions, and setting up an online global members group to facilitate ongoing discussion after the event.

A recurring theme in many presentations and sessions was the viability and growth of global studies as an emerging post-disciplinary field with a decided post-disciplinary perspective. Among the concerns voiced was lack of a clear concept of foundational texts or canon for the field. Another concern was that global studies has not taken root in the global South, and, indeed, there is resistance in that region on issues of ideology.

This international global studies symposium created opportunities for dialogue among participants and generated many new questions. Universities participating in the symposium included: Aarhus University, Arizona State University, University of California at Santa Barbara, Duke University, Fudan University, Hanyang University, Hitotsubashi University, University of Hong Kong, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Leipzig University, Ateneo de Manila University, McMaster University, El Colegio de Mexico, University of Minnesota, The New School, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Roskilde University, Rutgers University at Newark, Shanxi University of Finance & Economics, Central University of Sikkim, Sophia University, Stellenbosch University, University of Vienna, University of Washington, and the University of Wroclaw.

Gracious hospitality and frequent settings for fellowship resulted in productive engagement. The Sophia University Graduate School of Global Studies and the Global Studies Consortium are to be applauded for a well organized symposium. Special kudos to David Wank of Sophia for playing a key role in the success of this event.

Fast Facts

Global Studies in Education (GSE)

Who
Increasingly, educators and trainers are becoming aware of the challenges presented by a complex and transforming world. Global Studies in Education enrolls educators from around the world who bring to the program a broad array of skills and interests. The program includes course-work opportunities to apply theories in practice.

Director: Dr. Fazal Rizvi

What
GSE is an online Master’s degree in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Illinois.

When
Established: 2004 as a project supported by the Center for Global Studies
Synchronous session times: weekday evenings
1st Cohort: January 2005
7th Cohort: January 2009
8th Cohort: Fall 2009 (applications due: April 15, 2009)

Where
Online classrooms using synchronous and asynchronous platforms.

How many
Current students: 80
Current cohorts: 4
Graduates: 36
Current program course offerings per semester: 5
Years to complete degree: 2 years including summers

How to apply
Cohort 8 will begin in Fall 2009. For information and application, visit our website:
http://gse.ed.uiuc.edu/admission.html
My Summer FLAS in Georgia

By Terrell Starr

Most 2008 summer FLAS students probably spent their summers at some intensive language program in a small college town. But not me. I was in Georgia. Not the Peach State, but the country of Georgia in the former Soviet Union. And I loved it.

I really enjoyed my FLAS experience in Georgia for several reasons. One, I was able to take third year Georgian, a level unavailable to me here in the U.S. I was also able to return to the country where I spent two years as a Peace Corps Volunteer. And I took advantage of the location by traveling throughout the region.

One of things I noticed about Georgia when I got settled in was the construction of new hotels, apartment complexes and commercial buildings throughout the capital of Tbilisi. Banks were everywhere and there seemed to be an ATM on each corner. These things were not nearly as abundant three years ago.

And, man, I have to tell you how much attention I got as a black person over there. I’m not new to being given extra attention because of my skin tone, but it never ceases to amaze how curious (and ignorant) some people can get when they see black folks for the first time. I’m used to Eastern Europeans assuming I am Jamaican, Indian, Nigerian and everything else that has nothing to do with the stars and stripes, but I roll with it.

I saw 2-Pac graffiti everywhere. I don’t know how and why but Georgians love 2-Pac. “He’s our brother,” one Georgian I knew said of the great rap legend.

I was treated really well by the Georgian people and am making plans to return to Tbilisi next year.

I can go on and on about my great summer FLAS experience, but you’ll have to wait until my first book comes out a few years from now to learn more. Stories on Georgian Hip-Hop clubs, cows, and encounters with crazy street people will be included.

Recent FLAS Recipients
Lauren Anaya...Anthropology...Italian
Zachariah Claybaugh...REEEC...Albanian
Erica Hill...Sociology...Swahili
Chen Li...Linguistics...Arabic
Megan Osfar...Linguistics...Russian
Hasan Shahid...CLACS...Portuguese
Sarah Simeziane...Linguistics...Arabic
Benjamin Slade...Linguistics...Hindi
Terrell Starr...REEEC/Journalism...Georgian/Russian
Nathaniel Uchtmann...Law/Medicine...Swahili
Jill Ward...Linguistics...Hindi

FLAS – The Foreign Language and Areas Studies Fellowship Program

The Center for Global Studies (CGS) Foreign Language and Areas Studies Fellowship (FLAS) fellowship program provides graduate students with funding to learn less commonly taught languages and cultural skills needed to deal effectively with global issues in their future professions.

Graduate students from all disciplines are eligible to apply for FLAS fellowships through CGS. Students of exceptional promise who plan to enter professional fields, such as engineering, business, economics, health, agriculture, library and information science, social work, planning, education, labor relations, government, and non-governmental and intergovernmental organizations, are especially encouraged to apply. Preference is given to students with international concentrations in their discipline.

What is unique about the FLAS program at CGS is that graduate and professional students at Illinois can learn a language relevant to their projected professional work and not be expected to teach the language or be fully engaged in area studies. For example, a student in the College of Medicine studied advanced Portuguese in order to learn more about emerging infectious diseases.

The Center for Global Studies typically awards eight academic-year fellowships and six summer fellowships to candidates who show promise of becoming leaders in their field of study, professional work, or public service. Applications are evaluated on the basis of the graduate academic record, extra-disciplinary and professional activities, and letters of recommendation.

Please contact Steve Witt with questions about CGS FLAS awards: swwitt@illinois.edu, 217-265-7518.

Eligible Languages
3rd year & beyond
Arabic Chinese
Bulgarian Japanese
Czech Russian
Hebrew
Hindi
Korean
Italian
Lingala
Persian
Polish
Portuguese
Russian
Serbian or Croatian
Swahili
Turkish
Ukrainian
Wolof

Recent FLAS Recipients
Lauren Anaya...Anthropology...Italian
Zachariah Claybaugh...REEEC...Albanian
Erica Hill...Sociology...Swahili
Chen Li...Linguistics...Arabic
Megan Osfar...Linguistics...Russian
Hasan Shahid...CLACS...Portuguese
Sarah Simeziane...Linguistics...Arabic
Benjamin Slade...Linguistics...Hindi
Terrell Starr...REEEC/Journalism...Georgian/Russian
Nathaniel Uchtmann...Law/Medicine...Swahili
Jill Ward...Linguistics...Hindi
The Global Demand for Biofuel Workshop for Agriculture Educators
A Successful Collaboration with NRCs in Minnesota and Indiana

By Elizabeth Pfiester, Summer Intern

This summer I had the pleasure to help coordinate and attend the Global Demand for Biofuel workshop. The Center for Global Studies organized the workshop primarily for agriculture and science educators; it was held on July 19 – 21 and was co-sponsored by the Center for the Study of Global Change at Indiana University and the Institute for Global Studies at the University of Minnesota. I and the 25 educators who attended heard lectures by distinguished researchers from the University of Illinois and participated in a variety of activities, including a tour of a field test plot of miscanthus, an alternative fuel crop.

Thursday evening, participants and speakers arrived at the Hilton Garden Inn Conference Center to learn about the Biology Behind Biofuels from Andrew Leakey, assistant professor of Plant Biology at the University of Illinois. Burt Swanson, professor emeritus of Agricultural and Consumer Economics, delivered an inspiring keynote presentation, The Food vs. Fuel Debate, which provided a context for information presented over the next two days.

The first full day of the workshop began with a panel of experts discussing Standard and Alternative Raw Materials for Biofuels. Panelists included John Santas (ACES Global Connect), Frank Dohleman (Plant Biology), Lance Schideman (Agricultural and Biological Engineering), and Eric Rund (International AGtivities). Topics included a comparison of ethanol production and policies in Brazil and the U.S., and the potential for perennial grasses and algae as biofuel stocks. Next, Vijay Singh (Agricultural and Biological Engineering) and Ted Funk (Agricultural Engineering & Extension Specialist) explained in a lucid fashion the highly technical science behind biological processing options and thermochemical processing of biomass.

Afternoon sessions included a visit to the Illinois Sustainable Technology Center for a talk by Illinois Extension Educator George Czapar, The Impacts of Biofuel Production on Water Resources. Tim Lindsey spoke on the Adoption of Biofuels Technologies from an Innovation Diffusion Perspective prior to leading us on a backstage tour of his biodiesel lab. There we learned about producing biodiesel, and saw their portable lab that can be borrowed by high schools for on-site experiments. At the conclusion of the tour, we were told to put our noses up to the exhaust of a “vegetarian” vehicle to smell the popcorn-like odor of biodiesel which differs from the petroleum fumes that come from gasoline. During our visit to the miscanthus plot, Frank Dohleman showed us comparisons between test plots of miscanthus and switchgrass, growth patterns of the plants, and described some of the other experiments taking place in the fields.

Saturday’s presentations were especially noteworthy. For me, a student of International Relations, the talk by Alex Winter-Nelson (Agricultural Economics), Impacts of Biofuel Production in Developing Nations on Local Lifestyles, was particularly interesting. Agricultural Economist Chris Hurt traveled from Purdue University to deliver a lively talk, Biofuels and World Commodity Markets. Jesse Faber and Parker Bane, teachers at Pontiac Township High School, led a discussion of their own biofuel projects, and all educators shared ideas about how to incorporate what they had learned during the workshop into their curricula.

Although I’m no agriculture or science expert, the information presented at this workshop was all extremely useful and enlightening. Before attending, I hadn’t fully realized that using corn or wheat to create fuel reduces the availability of grain used to feed people. I hadn’t understood that alternative fuels can affect our water sources. I hadn’t appreciated that sometimes our problems can’t be solved the moment we find potential solutions. What I came to understand is that rational and complete answers to a problem, such as the energy crisis, take time, effort, and an open mind.

Elizabeth Pfiester held a summer internship at the Center for Global Studies. She is majoring in International Relations at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois.
Dr. Burton Swanson Receives Lifetime Achievement Award for International Service in Extension Education

Dr. Burton E. Swanson, Professor Emeritus of Rural Development at Illinois, received the first distinguished Lifetime Achievement Award from the International Society for Extension Education. The award was formally presented at the International Seminar on Strategies for Improving Livelihood Security of Rural Poor held in Goa, India, September 24-27, 2008.

Dr. Swanson was recognized for 46 years of international service in Extension Education, and Agricultural and Rural Development, including work in over 35 developing countries. Dr. Swanson has traveled to India more than 20 times, starting in 1966 when the U.S. government was assisting India during its first major food crisis.

Most recently, Dr. Swanson helped prepare two major World Bank projects to help transform the Indian agricultural extension system from a top-down bureaucracy to a more decentralized, participatory, market-driven extension system focused on the needs of small-scale and women farmers. Under these two projects, over 27,000 producer groups were organized (a third of which were women’s groups) and average farm income increased at about 6% per year compared to about 1% in non-project districts. After pilot testing this model in 63 districts across eight states, the Government of India authorized extending this model to all rural districts throughout the country.

New Policy Brief Publication Series

In response to increasing awareness of the significance of global issues, CGS has launched a new quarterly publication, Policy Brief. Articles in this series are short and address issues of local and international interest for the campus community and readers throughout the country and world.

The inaugural issue addresses global climate change. Michael Schlesinger, professor of atmospheric sciences at Illinois, presents a case for further action on the part of the international community to monitor the effects of human activity upon levels of CO2 in the atmosphere. The second issue is by Hadi Esfahani, “The Economic Consequences of Iran—U.S. Relations.” Issues are available online for download: http://www.cgs.uiuc.edu/resources/policy_brief/index.html.
Information Sharing in Cambodia

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material for which there is no systematic publication or distribution mechanism readily available, nor are there bibliographic and organizational controls. Perhaps at first glance this seems to be an issue only to the library community, but the impact is felt in many areas of policy-making, resource distribution, and general well-being for target populations. Items such as research reports that you might have access to “in country” are nowhere to be found upon returning to a home institution. Both information and knowledge is lost or inaccessible.

In order to better understand the phenomenon of NGO knowledge production, I traveled to Cambodia in May, 2008. Interviews with a variety of NGO directors were set up in both Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. A survey of about 125 NGOs in the country had been sent out electronically to assess some of the information resources of the organizations. Research has shown that getting survey responses from developing countries is extremely difficult. The best strategy in these geographic regions is the “drop and pick” approach where the researcher contacts a responsible member of the target organization, drops off the survey in person, and returns to pick it up at a specific date and time.

The interest areas of the organizations chosen for visits varied from protection of women and children to education to land ownership and the law to services for the disabled to agricultural development. The organizations have many things in common however. The individuals participating in the interviews, with one exception, are all Cambodian nationals. The manner in which information was disseminated is similar from one organization to the next. Each has a target population to which information is given at a personal level. This might include information about individual rights, where services are available, and where to go for more help.

Media channels are the next most important target for sharing information. Radio broadcasts in particular are used both for getting information to the clientele and getting information on the activities and/or problems of the organizations out to the larger world. A surprising number of agencies produce and distribute audio and video tapes for broadcast. Some agencies are especially dependent on websites, while others cannot afford a web presence. They lack either the finances, or expertise, or both to set up and maintain a presence in the virtual world. Even less wealthy organizations are adept at promoting themselves, using a variety of methods for public relations, including newspaper articles, posters, leaflets, and widely distributed newsletters.

A third target for concentrated information dissemination is, of course, the funding agency. Although reporting parameters varied, every agency director interviewed was emphatic that a large number of reports are sent out every year as a means of proving accountability on the part of the NGO. The results in a fourth area of interest, government information sharing, are a bit more mixed. Sometimes the agency deemed it very politically expedient to share information with government officials, but more often the details of the organization’s work are not shared due to a perceived concern about the dangers that might be involved. Some organizations, especially those working with women and children, are viewed as a threat by enforcement officials.

Some surprising findings included the number of schools being built and the recognition and emphasis on the importance of literacy. Although I am not a sociologist, I was interested to encounter what appeared to be a growing “striving middle class” in some of the most unlikely places. In many, mostly rural areas, I found examples of the leapfrog approach to technology. If the power supply is tenuous or non-existent, solar panels are used to power computers. The problem with a lack of telephone wire, as in most developing nations, is mitigated by using cell phones and wireless technology.

This ability to communicate more easily might be a key factor in the development of this country where the annual per capita income was $589 in 2007, double what it was ten years ago. The country’s economy has experienced an annual growth in GDP of about 10% in the last several years, although about one-third of the population still exists below the country’s poverty level. With tourism and the textile industry as the major economic drivers, recognition of the importance of communication within and outside of the country is growing.

In many ways, the NGO’s ability to disseminate information is essential to development. As one director indicated, for many years the country had been like a frog in the well, seeing only darkness, eating, and sleeping, just existing, not really living and unaware of the world around them. He hoped his organization and others would bring many of the people in his country out of the well and into the light.
Your support enables us to provide professional development opportunities to teachers, develop resource materials, and offer educational opportunities to the broader community to learn about globalization and its impacts.

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