



Announcement of a Pioneering European Workshop on:

Moving worldviews

Reshaping sciences, policies and practices for Endogenous Sustainable Development

The Netherlands, Soesterberg, 28 - 30 November 2005

Challenging realities

Sustainable development and guiding worldviews

The globalisation of communication and markets has contributed to an enormous boost in global flows of capital, products, people, information and ideas. As world economic growth gains momentum and agricultural production increases, ecological footprints get deeper and deeper. Traditional cultures and local institutions are losing their function. The gap between rich and poor is widening. Injustice, poverty, ignorance and violence are widespread and cause great suffering. The need for sustainable development and innovation in science, policy and practice is evident. As worldviews guide people's positions and actions (see Box 1) it is important to review and question the impact of leading and emerging worldviews. Do they reflect a good balance between materialism, economy and care for people and nature and what do they teach us about sustainable ways of production and consumption?

Box 1. What is a worldview?

According to the Leo Apostel Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies (CLEA) Belgium, a worldview can be defined as a coherent body of knowledge that covers all aspects of the world. A worldview is perceived as a *map* that people use *to orient and explain* the world, and from which they *evaluate and act*, and put forward *prognosis and visions of the future*.

Moving worldviews

The worldviews held by the general public, policy makers and scientists are becoming increasingly diverse reflecting the growth of multiculturalism, new scientific insights, globalisation and individualisation. More and more people are finding it difficult to accept conventional, materialistic and science-based approaches to development and innovative individuals, citizen groups, scientists and policy makers are increasingly challenging how things are being done. New visions and practices emerge typified by current approaches to rural renewal, organic agriculture, sustainable energy, complementary medicine, alternative education and solidarity economics. Likewise there are new approaches to science (such as transdisciplinarity) and to policy (such as support for ecofriendly practices).

However, there is often disagreement on the direction of national and international policies, science and practices. How should this increasing diversity of worldviews be dealt with and how can the dominant role played by materialistic approaches and rationalist scenarios be reduced in economic and social development?

Incoherent relationships between practitioners, scientists and policy makers

In recent decades, policies and sciences have emphasised modernisation in a generic and materialistic way and have been unable to integrate the diversity of visions in an adequate way.

- Mainstream science, increasingly in alliance with private companies, has created schools of thinking and stimulated developments that are not always appreciated by policy makers and practitioners. This explains the gap that exists between the different actors in the ongoing debates on GMOs, the globalisation of markets, and the issue of quality in food production.
- Practitioners have been confronted with new technologies and policies that were not always in line with their own values and preferences. They often found ways to cope with these policies and many have developed practices and lifestyles that fit their own worldviews.
- Policies have not taken sufficient account of the wishes and values of those they were designed to serve and have not made adequate use of new scientific insights. This has led to lack of trust between the public and policy makers.

This lack of coherence and synergy restrains the emergence of innovative policies, sciences and practices that could support sustainable development. There is a clear need to reshape the relationship between these three sets of actors. What should be the approach to innovative initiatives and how can relations between the actors be improved?

Social learning for sustainable development

The search for answers to these challenges cannot be left to science, politicians, and practitioners alone. Such an undertaking can only be successful when it becomes part of a social learning process in which all those involved are actively engaged. The conflicts and contradictions between mainstream developments and initiatives for sustainable development indicate that a societal dialogue on worldviews and sustainable development is important and timely.

The Compas Programme

Since 1998 the Compas programme has been engaged in intercultural dialogues on development approaches with a focus on the South. It is studying the role of worldviews on the practices, policies and scientific approaches in different cultural contexts. A major observation is that in most non-western worldviews there is a notion of three interrelated worlds: the material, the social and the spiritual. From the perspective of these cultures, sustainable development can only be achieved if there is a balance between the material, the social and the spiritual domains. Compas supports development which builds on local culture: its worldview, values, institutions, knowledge and practices. This approach is known as ***endogenous development***: development from within. This approach presents challenges for policies, the scientific communities and for practitioners not only in the South, but also in the North.

Compas partners concluded that traditional worldviews and practices are weakening under the influences of other cultures. They observed that this creates serious problems for sustainable development and cultural diversity. They experience the economic and cultural influences from the West as being particularly threatening. For Compas, this raised the need to further analyse the relations between moving worldviews, sustainable development, innovative practices and effective partnerships.

Four workshops and one Conference

For this purpose, Compas, in collaboration with other innovative organisations, will organise a series of workshops. In the second half of 2005 there will be four continental workshops in Asia, Africa, South America and in Europe. In 2006 an International Synthesis Conference will

be held in Switzerland. This conference will build on the outcomes of the four continental workshops and will suggest practical ways of dealing with moving worldviews, reshaping science, policies and practices and improving the relationships between the stakeholders in a global perspective. The aim is not to produce blueprint solutions but to contribute to an inspiring learning process that creates conditions for differentiated harmony and challenges the way diversity and uncertainty are being handled.

The European workshop

In Europe the workshop will be held on 28-30 November 2005. Compas will organise this workshop in co-operation with the Centre for Development and Environment of the University of Bern, the Foundation for Environmental Consciousness (StiM) and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM). Different stakeholders and innovative actors in endogenous and sustainable development will assess the existing situation, inspire and challenge each other and will explore new options and actions. Its focus will be on rural development, but the lessons will be drawn from general policies and sciences and the urban domains as well.

Objectives

The workshop will:

- Contribute to social learning on the relations between innovations, sustainable development and moving worldviews.
- Suggest ways to improve relations between practitioners, scientists and policy makers to make initiatives towards sustainable development more effective.
- Initiate new initiatives for endogenous sustainable development.
- Forge new partnerships between practitioners, scientists and policy makers working towards sustainable development.

Participants and process

The workshop will bring together different innovative persons in the domains of policy, science and practice. It will include European scientists, policy makers, practitioners, as well as spiritual leaders, artists, and representatives of the corporate sector who are working towards more sustainable developments and who are eager to learn from each other and to build strategic alliances. Between 35 and 40 participants will be invited individually. The workshop will take three days. It has the character of a collective brainstorm and self-reflection on the existing situation, on mutual learning and on formulating options for the future. It will be highly interactive and should lead to conclusions and initiatives that are shared by the participants. We therefore expect that the participants will be able to attend the meeting for the full three days.

The workshop will be held at the conference centre Kontakt der Kontinenten in Soesterberg, the Netherlands. The moderation will be Mr Paul Engel, Director of the European Centre for Development Policy Management in Maastricht.

Guidelines for contributions

The participants are requested to write a contribution which discusses:

1. The main characteristics of the innovative experiences in which they are involved.
2. The worldview that has guided their experiences (preferably in the terms used by CLEA, see Box 1).
3. How the relationships between practitioners, scientists and policy makers has influenced their experiences and sustainability.
4. Suggestions for new initiatives for sustainable endogenous development.
5. Suggestions on how to improve the relationships between practitioners, scientists and policy makers to enhance new initiatives for sustainable development.

In preparation of the workshop, participants are requested to write a summary of their contribution (maximum 400 words). This **summary** should be with Compas *not later than September 1, 2005*.

The **full contribution** should be with Compas *not later than September 30, 2005*.

Contributions in the form of a poem or other artistic expression are very welcome.

Contributions should be sent to Compas@etcnl.nl.

The tentative programme

Day 1: Inspiring examples and ideas

- Presenting and examining innovative experiences and worldviews of the participants, such as: research on modern physics, consciousness, cosmology and spirituality; transdisciplinarity; corporate social responsibility; rural renewal; complementary health; endogenous development in the South; co-creation; transition science; feminist visions and practices, consumers initiatives and policies for sustainability.

Day 2: Self-reflection and innovations

- Assessing the worldviews that play a role in the communities of innovative practitioners, policy makers and scientists of which the participants are a part.
- Revisiting the own realities per stakeholder category (practitioners, policy makers, scientists) and formulating suggestions for improvements.

Day 3: Reshaping relations

- Revisiting the links between science, policy and practice and search for reshaping the relationships.
- Formulating new initiatives for practice, policies and science.

Outputs of the workshop

The outputs of the workshop will be the following:

- New insights on the relations between worldviews, innovation and sustainable development.
- Inspiration for further learning processes on moving worldviews and innovations for sustainable development.
- Suggestions for new relations between innovative practitioners, scientists and policy makers.
- New initiatives to continue with this learning process and further innovations for sustainable development.

The outcome of the four continental workshops will be used as input for the international synthesis conference in Switzerland. The outcome of the international synthesis conference will be presented to practitioners, policy makers and scientists engaged in sustainable development through publication by the participating organisations. The Compas programme and other participating organisations will stimulate further European initiatives and will link these with activities in Asia, Africa and Latin America so that co-evolution and mutual learning continues to take place.

Contact

The workshop will be co-ordinated by Bertus Haverkort, Compas/ETC Leusden, The Netherlands.

For questions or remarks please contact members of the organising committee:

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For more information on Compas see www.compasnet.org.