

# A BETTER KNOWLEDGE FOR A BETTER COOPERATION: THE CONTRIBUTION OF HUMAN SCIENCES FOR AN INTERCULTURAL COOPERATION TO DEVELOPMENT

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The panel aimed at bringing together researchers in human sciences who share an attentive eye to the specific import of local cultures, knowledge and tradition in the activities subsumed under the collective, and often too vague, concept of cooperation to development.

Our basic idea was that a good preventive analysis of the field, of the human groups living and interacting (and sometimes coming into conflicts) in it, of their specific cultures and languages (often widely divergent among themselves) – chiefly in the poorest areas of the countries in the South of the World – represents a priority in the planning of cooperation projects that aim at efficiency either in terms of empowerment or of assumption of responsibility and management by the local partners. We believe that achieving these aims could bring a better stability of the partnership and a better time continuity in the sustainable-development projects proposed and initiated by international partners.

These ideas derive of course from our direct field experience, and we think that they are – sometimes tacitly – shared nowadays among practitioners in cooperation and development. They are widely echoed in projects in such different fields as, to mention just a few, eco-farming, sustainable tourism and cultural and linguistic revitalization. Here and elsewhere the vision lying behind these projects and inspiring them has enabled, we dare say, a considerable level of success. It is a vision which stresses the enormous value of the specific cultures and traditions of the local people(s) in a perspective which can be labelled a *dynamic safeguard of the past*, and whose actual and final aim is to assure the safeguard of the traditional heritage of the communities involved or in any way interested in the project. As an additional – but far from secondary – bonus, these communities could therefore more spontaneously and confidentially join the project and accept the new perspective of eco-compatible growth promoted by the investors.

These ideas were developed and conjugated during the panel in such different areas as: ethnicity and their political exploitation (Fontana), language and educational policy (Manfredi and Tosco), agro-forestral cooperation among marginalized peoples (Micheli), the archaeological data on ancient farming systems with an eye to facilitate the design of future strategies for sustainable land-use (Sernicola), or, finally, socio-technical innovations and the collective participation of the community (Silvestri).

The proceedings put together all the contributions presented and thoroughly discussed at CUCSTorino2013, and namely, in alphabetical order:

- Lorenza Belinda Fontana: *The power of ethnic labeling: the role of international cooperation and academic community in shaping the new indigenous movement in Bolivia*
- Stefano Manfredi and Mauro Tosco: *Language uses vs. language policy: South Sudan and Juba Arabic in the post-independence era*
- Ilaria Micheli: *Safeguarding the past to guarantee a better future: the role of ethnolinguistics in the NECOFA projects among the Mariashoni Okiek community*
- Luisa Sernicola: *Strategies of land exploitation and management in the area of Aksum (Northern Ethiopia) between the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC and the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD*
- Federico Silvestri: *The case of Zimbabwe Bushpump like a socio-technical network*

We offer them in the hope that they may raise consciousness on the – in our view, fundamental – role of human sciences in cooperation.