

Northeast Japan After the Tsunami

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WHEN IN ROME

By Robin Palmer

I've had some rather strange experiences in Rome over the years...

One late afternoon in the summer of 1959, I returned to my pensione in Trastevere on the west bank of the Tiber and was handed a telegram informing me that I had won a Fairbridge Scholarship to the University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland (now the University of Zimbabwe). A fellow guest, from the Kenyan colonial civil service, heard me read out the telegram to a friend and unhesitatingly advised, 'go there, young man – Rhodesia is a wonderful country!' I did, and enjoyed the most amazing education, both on and off campus, for which I have been eternally grateful. It changed the whole direction of my life.

The next time I went to Rome was almost half a century later, in 2006, when FAO invited me, as Oxfam GB's Global Land Adviser, to a so-called Expert Meeting on Good Governance in Land Tenure and Administration. I gave a rather pessimistic talk on *Civil Society, 'Good Governance' and Land Rights in Africa – Some Reflections*. I argued that there was no culture of genuine democratic political engagement in modern Africa, with governments and civil society deeply distrustful of each other, and that the space was diminishing. I then chastised my hosts for the decision to abolish the posts held by their regional land officers, particularly one of an outstanding women's land rights activist, Kaori Izumi, with whom I had collaborated in Southern and East Africa, who I said should have been at the meeting. I asked them if they were not retreating from the perils and pitfalls of land reform, on which FAO had done excellent work in the past in countries such as Angola and Mozambique, in favour of the safer and doubtless more lucrative waters of depoliticised land administration.

Given this brief encounter, I was a little surprised when, in December 2009, FAO invited me back to Rome as a discussant for a report it had commissioned on *Gender, Land Tenure, and Land Policy in Rural Areas*. I began by saying that my 9-year old granddaughter Jess thought that the rules of primogeniture regarding the British monarchy were clearly unfair; I advised her to tackle this when she was a little older. I added that the paper's author, Susana Lastarria-Cornhiel, and I had only recently met for the first time, though we had 'known' each other electronically for decades. She was very surprised to find that this Robin was a man – which I took to be a very great compliment.

I went on to praise the work of Kaori Izumi, who had been FAO's Southern and Eastern Africa Land Tenure Officer, and had recently left FAO in Rome after a very unhappy year there. Though Kaori had enjoyed little support from her superiors, she and I had worked together on women's land rights and she had carried out and commissioned important work and research on the rights of widows and orphans in the context of HIV and AIDS. After the gender meeting, over a cup of coffee, I was

given the most fearsome dressing down. What right did I have to come here and celebrate Kaori's work in this way, I was asked? Every right, I replied. You invited me here as a discussant and I imagined that I was free to say what I thought – and I thought that her work was outstanding and a great credit to FAO. A very curious encounter.

Kaori went back to live in her native Japan. A week before the earthquake and tsunami she wrote that she was getting a little bored. Not anymore! She immediately set up a local citizens' support network and then campaigned tirelessly, at local, national and international levels to raise awareness of the disaster and its likely long-term consequences, especially for children. Fukushima, she says, was an eye-opener for her, exposing deep corruption in Japanese society. Her ultimate objective is to have a nuclear- and corruption-free world.

I was back in Rome for a 4th time in May this year. I had earlier received a phone call from Carlos Tarazona, FAO's Evaluation Manager. Would I be interested in leading an evaluation of FAO's work in *Tenure, Rights and Access to Land and other Natural Resources*? I said I very much appreciated the approach, but that I knew of someone who was vastly experienced, was very strong on both the 'technical' and the 'political' side, and had been involved in many such evaluations over the years – Martin Adams!

Martin duly graciously accepted this burden. Then Carlos rang me again to ask whether I might like to join an Expert Panel (these things always have capitals in the FAO world!) to comment on Martin's draft inception report and come to Rome to meet the evaluation team and interview some FAO staff working on tenure. I was informed that the Expert Panel of six

would be 'of global repute'. So naturally I accepted. It is a phrase I shall remember!

I took my partner Lisi and we enjoyed a wonderful few days' holiday in Rome either side of the expert business. Rome of course is a fantastic city to walk around – stunning buildings, amazing light, wonderful trees, an incredible view almost each way you turn. And the food and wine aren't too bad either!

FAO resides in what was once Mussolini's Ministry of Colonies, a truly fascist building with endless corridors (see photo). You could close your door for decades and no one would know you were there. You might even die there and no one would know. FAO staff often joke about this.

Despite the architecture, we had an extremely interesting two days, particularly getting the impressions of different FAO staff about their inter-relationships

Despite the architecture, we had an extremely interesting two days, particularly getting the impressions of different FAO staff about their inter-relationships. And I thought Oxfam had a complex bureaucracy! Someone who had joined the gender team a few months earlier said that she still had no idea what FAO's vision on gender was.

The FAO tenure team has been totally preoccupied in recent years with drafting and consulting on its *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land and other Natural Resources*. The minutes of our Expert Panel meeting delicately note that 'Robin feels that this time and money might have been better spent doing something else (but believes this would be a minority view at FAO).'

I had attended a Voluntary Guidelines

Photo: Gerda Adams



Kaori Izumi at Robin Palmer's Farewell to Oxfam, February 2007.

consultation with the private sector in London in January 2010. It was an interesting occasion, celebrating the work of good investors and wondering how to deal with the bad.

The following day, at the House of Commons, I was at a packed meeting of the All Party Parliamentary Group on *Farms Race: Foreign Land Acquisitions in Africa*. Out of nowhere, I suddenly got up and asked – 'would Cecil Rhodes have signed a code of conduct?' Having asked this – clearly rhetorical – question I felt compelled to write about it. Hence my *New Scramble for Africa? in Mokoro Newsletter 52* in May 2010, and then in September a 'proper' academic paper stuffed with footnotes, *Would Cecil Rhodes have signed a Code of Conduct? Reflections on Global Land Grabbing and Land Rights in Africa, Past and Present*.

We experts of global repute have been asked to return to Rome in October to meet Martin and his team again and to discuss a draft of their final report, which will both evaluate FAO's past work on tenure and make suggestions on where and what it might usefully work on in the future. The latter is clearly critical in a world of rising food prices, food insecurity, and what Oxfam has recently called 'a failing food system.' In the meantime, Martin and his colleagues will have travelled to Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Hungary and Moldova.

On the day after our meeting I went to visit the International Land Coalition (ILC), which is also based in Rome. Liz had recently written a fine report for them on gender and land grabbing and had just been in Rome working on gender and the voluntary guidelines for FAO. Martin had recently discussed his FAO tenure work with the ILC. The ILC have invited me to give a seminar there in October. I'm thinking of calling it 'curious encounters in Rome'.

Photo: fao.org



The FAO building, Rome

COUNTRY REFLECTIONS

By Catherine Dom

My top four country thoughts at the moment, about the four countries in which I've learned most...

The contrast between **Cambodia** and **Ethiopia**

In **Cambodia** people never say no, government officials not more than the others - but that doesn't mean yes. In **Ethiopia** people do say no when they think no, and usually if they say yes, they will do what they say they would do - and that may or may not result in what you believed would happen because they may have said yes to something a little different from what you thought had been said. After all, it's THEIR country.

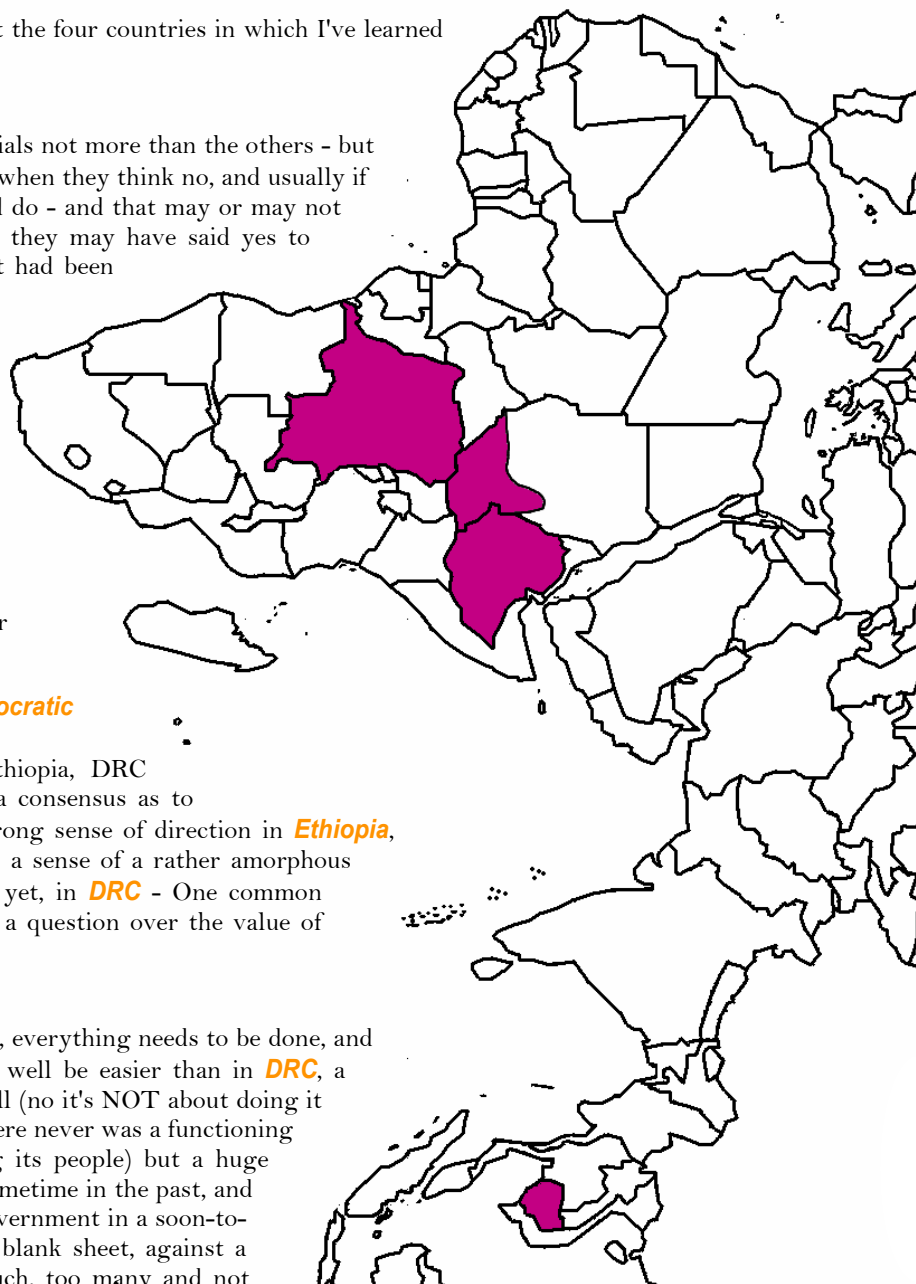
Cambodia: a country in which the expanding middle/low middle class know what they want for themselves and above all for their children, but reckon that "as a country, we don't know where we are going" because their government gives precious little sign that it's working on setting a direction for the country. **Ethiopia**: somewhat the other way round, a government which knows where it wants the country to go and thinks that therefore, it also knows what's best for everyone...

The contrast between **Ethiopia** and the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**

Two large countries, **DRC** a lot larger than Ethiopia, DRC immensely rich, potentially, while there's not yet a consensus as to where **Ethiopia's** growth might come from... A strong sense of direction in **Ethiopia**, even if not the direction that 'donors' like best, vs. a sense of a rather amorphous enormous "mass", with hardly any clear direction yet, in **DRC** - One common point, sorry to say something politically incorrect, a question over the value of what we call 'democratic elections'...

The contrast between **DRC** and **South Sudan**

Both deeply fragile, **South Sudan** not yet a country, everything needs to be done, and it's a lot about starting from scratch... which may well be easier than in **DRC**, a country where everything remains to be done as well (no it's NOT about doing it again, pretty fundamental mistake to believe this, there never was a functioning government in the sense of a government serving its people) but a huge façade of systems supposed to have been working sometime in the past, and that cannot be brushed under the carpet. A weak government in a soon-to-be country ready to write its future on an almost blank sheet, against a weak government dealing with a legacy of too much, too many and not enough space to write new things...



| | Cambodia | Democratic Republic of Congo | Ethiopia | South Sudan |
|--|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------|
| Population (million) | 14.8 | 66.0 | 82.8 | 8.26 |
| GDP per capita PPP (current international \$) | 1,915 | 319 | 934 | 2210* |
| Percent of population living on less than \$1.25 (ppp) a day | 28.3 | 59.2 | 39.0 | n/a |
| Life expectancy at birth | 61.5 | 47.8 | 55.7 | 58* |
| Human Development Index value (rank) | 0.494 (124) | 0.239 (168) | 0.328 (157) | 0.379 (154)* |
| Corruption Perception Index value (rank) | 2.1 (154) | 2.0 (164) | 2.7 (116) | 1.6 (172)* |

* figures for Sudan as data not available for South Sudan

NORTHEAST JAPAN AFTER THE TSUNAMI

By Alyne Delaney

As an applied maritime anthropologist interested in social organization and resource rights, my work usually takes me around European seas; more rarely, I am fortunate enough to travel to Africa or Southeast Asia on projects and consultancies. None of my recent projects, however, have taken me to the site dearest to my heart: Northeast (Tohoku) Japan. I have traveled back and forth to Japan for almost twenty-five years and it was here I chose to go through the most important of the 'rites of passage' in anthropology: dissertation fieldwork. I spent 18 months living in my coastal village of choice, being curious, intruding upon lives, learning amazing things, and making wonderful friends.

As I am sure you are aware, this region of Japan was hit with a massive earthquake and a tremendous tsunami on March 11th of this year. When I first heard the news, I was passing through Copenhagen airport on my way to Co. Donegal, Ireland, literally about to board a plane when I by chance checked e-mail and saw a query from a relative: "Are your friends okay?" I didn't think much of it; the area had had an earthquake two days prior and people I knew were uninjured. But then, for some reason, I decided to take a quick look at a news station. I was horrified to discover this was a new, and even greater earthquake. Having lived in coastal communities in the area, I knew exactly what it meant for my friends and informants who were fishers and seaweed cultivators: the lucky ones would be the ones who simply lost everything (homes, work-sheds, equipment, boats) but their lives.

With the tsunami, Japan, in a few short minutes, went from being one of the world's largest aid donor nations – recent statistics (OECD) put it at \$9.5bn given or lent each year-- to becoming one of the biggest aid recipients. Over 25,000 people are dead or missing. At least 16 communities are completely gone and 95,000 buildings destroyed. It has been

estimated it will take years to clean up, scrap, burn and recycle the 25m tonnes of debris left behind. Such debris fields in many areas are broad, deep, and dangerous. And of course, heartbreaking.

The videos and photographs of the destruction are simply incredible. And yet, people who have actually been there volunteering say that the pictures can't convey the enormity of it all. The scale of the disaster is overwhelming. The task of rebuilding and re-starting lives is tremendous. Yet, that's the task we now have at hand.

When faced with an overwhelming and inconceivably difficult task or idea, it's often best to think in small steps, or at a small scale. So rather than thinking of all of Northeast Japan, what can I say of Miyagi Prefecture and my community of Shichigahama to shed some personal knowledge of what has happened and what may happen in the future?

According to the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) 98% of commercial fishing vessels and all aquaculture facilities/locations were destroyed in Miyagi Prefecture. In Shichigahama, in addition to the complete loss of the fisheries infrastructure (7 fishing district cooperatives, three aquaculture facilities, and one fish market), 90% of the farmland was inundated. Nearly 25% of the population was living in shelters immediately after the quake and tsunami. The official death toll in the community currently stands at 76. As you can see from these statistics, Shichigahama, thanks to its geography and topography was actually relatively lucky. Even still, there were many village areas completely wiped out and buried under 4 meters of debris.

Shichigahama, like much of Tohoku, has aspects of a traditional rural community. Coastal areas in particular were home to many enterprise households of long standing. And this is the crux of it for

thinking of the future: enterprise households.

In traditional areas of Japan, the family system is the "ie" or, what some have termed, the enterprise household. As such, these households can be defined as corporate entities which manage agricultural, fisheries, commercial, or artisanal activities. Such households bring both production and reproduction together within the setting of family life. I knew some households with four generations living together; and others which only had a couple.

Among Shichigahama's fishing cooperative members, work and family are really one. Membership in the fisheries cooperative (FCA) is always held by the household head. The *nori* cultivating subgroup of the FCA work as family-units, usually as husband and wife pairs, with the women also going on boats and taking care of processing activities. Each household has their own equipment and their own enterprise, unlike many areas in Western Japan where people tend to work more in corporate groups. The consequence for the Tohoku way of doing things is with approximately 100 households in the *nori* subgroup, there has been an approximate \$100 million loss in processing equipment alone. This figure doesn't include numbers for lost boats, ocean-based equipment, workshop buildings, or their homes and belongings.

The maritime population in Shichigahama, as in the rest of Japan and industrialized world, is a greying one. With a decline in family successors willing to take over the household enterprise, the fisheries cooperatives were already facing a decline in numbers, and consequently income. They were also struggling from losses to the Chile earthquake-induced tsunami the previous year; now their livelihoods are destroyed.

I have difficulty imagining life being the same for the FCA members in Shichigahama. With the expense of



Before (L) and after (R) satellite images showing the impact of the tsunami north of Sendai

starting over, and the high average age, there will most likely be a large number of retirements. With this, there may also be a fundamental switch in their methods; of those who remain, I am sure a number will turn to a corporate business model. If they do so, it will truly be an important shift as previous research showed FCA members preferred to act as independent operators for the amount of freedom and autonomy it

provided them. As an anthropologist, I believe knowing cultural details such as this is important for anticipating the impacts of development work intended to help them re-build their lives. Not considering such cultural preferences could inadvertently have a profound negative impact on the local society over time. For now, we know that the Shichigahama community and economy is hard hit;

maritime activities were the primary industry and these have now stopped for at least a year. How it will play out in the future remains to be seen.

Alyne is from Innovative Fisheries Management, Aalborg University Research Centre in Denmark.

A SPECIAL PLACE

By Stephen Turner

In a far corner of the far kingdom of Lesotho lies the Sehlabathebe National Park. Those seeking the Big Five (or even the Little Five that some southern African reserves offer as an alternative) will be disappointed. It is, nevertheless, a special place.

To get to Sehlabathebe, you can drive from Lesotho's capital Maseru – roughly south, then north east to the district of Qacha's Nek, then beyond the district headquarters and eventually along the watershed separating Lesotho and South Africa. The roads are better than they used to be, but it still takes most of the day. With a hardier vehicle, you can drive from Maseru east and then south through the central mountains and eventually over the rugged Matebeng Pass (2,940 metres above sea level). Vigorous types can drive through South Africa as far as the Bushman's Nek border post – but that's the only border post I know with an all-weather road on one side and a grassy footpath on the other. A few hours' hike up the escarpment, with the occasional baboon for company, brings you across the real frontier into Sehlabathebe National Park. Which is a long way of saying that Sehlabathebe is not that easy to reach. But

I have never regretted the effort. The 6,475 ha of the park are mostly montane grasslands. While the basalt mountains of Lesotho rise to 3,482 m, Sehlabathebe averages 2,400 m, so that the sandstone that underlies most of the kingdom and shapes the scenery of the western lowlands outcrops again here in the far east – forming a host of caves, arches, pools and crags that are fascinating to explore. The Three Bushmen and other high mountains rise dramatically on the north west, and the Drakensberg escarpment falls away to the east. So the park offers true mountain weather. Mist, sun and showers can rapidly succeed each other. Huge thunder, hard frosts and heavy blizzards are all possible.

The mountains of Lesotho were originally inhabited only by San or Bushmen, and many of their paintings remain on the Sehlabathebe sandstone. By the end of the 19th century the Basotho, themselves pushed against and into the mountains by colonial expansion that took all their territory west of the Caledon River, had exterminated or assimilated virtually all the San. Their villages crept up into the highlands – but they never put permanent settlements in Sehlabathebe. Instead,

various chiefs from across Qacha's Nek district used the area for summer grazing, allowing their subjects to send herdboys and stock to use the lush pastures. Many old kraals and a few stone herders' huts still nestle under overhangs in the sandstone.

Soon after the kingdom's independence in 1966, the idea of a national park at Sehlabathebe arose. It was proclaimed in

1970. 'People and parks', community-based ecotourism and the many other slogans of that ilk were yet to emerge. It appears that the chiefs and their people were simply told that they could no longer use the area for grazing. A 40 km fence was erected, and a lodge built – intended largely, it would seem, for the use of the country's first Prime Minister, Chief Leabua Jonathan, whose large and lavish bed, resplendent in red velvet, graced the biggest bedroom long after he was overthrown in the military coup of 1986. Most of the time, however, the lodge was available to ordinary visitors – I first went in 1982. But surrounding communities were understandably underwhelmed. The fence was often cut, the park would be grazed and occasionally burnt, and the few wildlife – mostly small buck – routinely poached. A visiting potentate gave Chief Leabua some large antelope which huddled morosely around a former kraal for some years until they expired in a blizzard. (More recently, Col. Gaddafi gave the current government some camels, but that's another story.)

And so the decades have quietly gone by at Sehlabathebe. Until recently it was Lesotho's only protected nature conservation area. Visitor numbers have been understandably few. Remarkably, the lodge has survived 40 years of low maintenance and extreme elements. Government has deployed minimal resources for nature conservation or maintenance of infrastructure. Southern parts of the park are now regularly grazed by herders who react violently to any attempt at control by the few rangers who occasionally venture there.

From the late 1980s, with an eye to better catchment management for the Lesotho Highlands Water Scheme that now supplies Johannesburg with much of its water, South Africa began to approach Lesotho about integrated conservation efforts for the Drakensberg-Maloti zone along eastern Lesotho, bordering on



Photo: Leigh Turner

Red hot pokers, Sehlabathebe

KwaZulu-Natal and the Eastern Cape. There are many protected areas along the Natal Drakensberg; Sehlabathebe was the only one on the Lesotho side. Ultimately, negotiations with the World Bank and the Global Environment Facility led to the latter funding the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier Conservation and Development Project, which was implemented between 2003 and 2009. This wide-ranging two-country initiative included park development planning for Sehlabathebe; a number of efforts to promote community involvement in, and benefit from, conservation and ecotourism in and around the park; and the

construction of new facilities, including a splendid new 72-bed lodge and a visitor arrival/information centre. Many consultants were deployed (including the author); many plans and reports were written.

When I last visited Sehlabathebe in February this year, not that much had changed. The new lodge was standing empty, awaiting government arrangements to award a management contract. (The private tourism sector is not enthusiastic about new ventures in the current economic climate.) The old lodge tottered comfortably on, with a coal fire to warm

the evening despite the summer season. The park fence had mostly fallen down. The ranger lamented continuing poaching. I fear that, like most such project-induced ventures, community liaison structures and ecotourism enterprises in the surrounding villages were in rapid decline.

And the silent peaceful beauty of the park was unchanged too. We wandered among the rock pools and caves, hiked down to the Tsoelikane Falls, plunged into an icy stream, sat on the escarpment gazing down into the far distance of South Africa. It's still a special place.

LAST WORDS

By Alice Hill

As my time at Mokoro draws to a close I have found myself looking back over the past 10 months I've spent in Oxford and thought this was the perfect opportunity to share some of these memories and reflections with you.

This time a year ago I had had my induction week, bought a capsule work wardrobe (which quickly became redundant) and sorted out a place to live in Oxford. I was ready to start at Mokoro – well, as ready as I ever could be. Having been a student for two years I had no idea how I would manage to survive the placement without a holiday every 10 weeks let alone getting up at the student equivalent of the crack of dawn. Surprisingly enough I successfully managed the latter, even getting myself to the gym for 6:30am twice a week and sometimes squeezing in the odd 10k run before work.

I find it hard to remember what I did in those first few weeks here although I know that Frieda never failed to find a task to keep me occupied. When I managed to exhaust even her creative thinking there was always the stationery cupboard to tidy (every intern's rite of passage, I believe). A beast of a cupboard, the size of which I believe we only truly appreciated come the office move when the contents had to be emptied into a rather large number of cardboard boxes and then tightly squeezed into a much smaller one.

Once I'd settled in and got to grips with what Mokoro does – a harder concept to grasp than I had initially imagined – I was ready for my first go at 'assignment support', the main reason I wanted the placement at Mokoro. My first taste of this was putting together a library and matching bibliography for a study on aid conditionality. This was pretty interesting for the first hour or so but by the second and even third day I couldn't believe I'd ever moaned about having to put together and format a reference list never exceeding two sides in length for all my essays at Bath. If I remember correctly this one was over twenty. Since then I have had to put together and format a few other bibliographies but they all seem to pale in comparison.

Although I do take pride in a perfectly alphabetised and formatted bibliography (it's the perfectionist in me) I have particularly relished the chance to research and explore countries and concepts of which I have very little knowledge. I came to Mokoro hoping to learn more about the field both generally and specifically and opportunities like the aforementioned certainly allowed me to do so. For example, around Christmas I was involved in putting together pen portraits on budget support in Afghanistan, Sierra Leone, Nepal and the Central African Republic. Although I knew hardly anything about budget support and even less about these countries I found the

research thoroughly fascinating and I learnt a great deal in the process.

The undoubted highlight of my time here has been my overseas assignment assisting Ann Bartholomew and Muriel Visser-Valfrey in the evaluation of Irish Aid's country strategy in Zambia, which I covered in Issue 56. As I wrote in my article, it was a truly unique experience from which I learnt a tremendous amount and I am immensely thankful to Mokoro for the opportunity.

Whilst reminiscing on my time here I can't help but find myself also thinking of the future. To be honest, I'd never thought past my placement year though it's becoming all too real that I'll leave university in a year's time to join a hugely saturated job market. However, unlike many of my friends, I now have 10 months exceptional work experience in a field I'm keen to pursue as well as some much needed advice on what to do next.

Timothy Boobier will be joining the Mokoro team for July and August providing office and assignment support. Daniela Huamán will be taking up the position of Bath Intern at the end of August. I wish them both the best of luck and hope they enjoy their time here as much as I have.

Mokoro provides advisory, analytical, evaluation and training services to the international development sector. We specialise in undertaking consultancies to support sustainable social and economic development and resource management. We have been in operation for over 28 years and our strong reputation is based on more than 600 consultancies undertaken for governments, aid agencies, donors and non-governmental organisations.

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