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RESEARCH

# NATURAL LIVESTOCK FARMING E-MOTIVE EXCHANGE EVALUATION REPORT

Mutual learning in an E-motive exchange in the Netherlands,  
2015

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**E**Motive

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

This report evaluates an E-Motive exchange visit in the Netherlands. Natural Livestock Farming (NLF), welcomed visitors from India (the Institute of Trans-disciplinary Institute of Health and Technology (TDU), from Uganda and from Ethiopia. This exchange is framed as a *return visit*. Dutch professionals have been to India, Uganda and Ethiopia in the first half of 2015. In E-Motive exchanges, the central idea is that partner organisations from the global South and North and participants in these exchanges, share their knowledge.

## 1.1. E-motive

E-Motive is a collaboration between multiple organisations. Its aim is to encourage and support projects working on active citizenship and social cohesion in the Netherlands, Poland and Spain, through exchanges with a range of inspiring methods and rich experiences from organisations in the global South. E-Motive exchanges are characterised by mutual benefit: Northern partners learn about new solutions from inspiring Southern professionals, widening their perspective on the Global South and development cooperation and start implementing the method in their context. Southern partners gain international recognition and expand their networks, thereby speeding up the spreading of their methodology. All parties benefit from local solutions for global problems.

Mainstream development cooperation is about bringing knowledge and resources from the 'North' to the 'South'. It is often overlooked that people in the Global South have years of experience in, for example, strengthening social fabrics and stimulating active citizenship. E-Motive provides an alternative to the inequality underlying mainstream development cooperation by creating a judgement-free setting of professional equality and mutual learning.

The E-Motive consortium partners are situated in the Netherlands (Movisie, NCDO Foundation/Kaleidos Research and Oxfam Novib), Spain (Coordinadora de ONG para el Desarrollo-España) and Poland (Stowarzyszenie "Jeden Swiat"). In this collaboration, Kaleidos Research (NCDO Foundation) is responsible for conducting research into the effects and impact on the perceived global interdependences and effectiveness of development cooperation, as well as perceptions of the global South in the North of the E-motive exchanges<sup>1</sup>.

## 1.2. Partner organisations

The main partners within this exchange are Natural Livestock Farming (NLF), the Indian Institute of Trans-disciplinary Institute of Health and Technology (TDU), from Bangalore, India, PENHA Uganda and ESAP from Ethiopia.

### *Natural Livestock Farming*

Natural Livestock Farming is an organisation around sustainable (Dutch) livestock initiatives, with a focus on dairy farming. Through the involvement of organisations and individuals in this sector in an interactive way the initiative aims to contribute to a better world in which milk and other livestock products are produced in a sustainable way. In the various countries involved the aim is to develop and contribute to national dairy strategies instead of simply copying the Dutch system.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.emotiveprogram.org/about-us>.

### *Trans Disciplinary University*

The Transdisciplinary University (TDU) is an innovation oriented University, legislated as an autonomous University. The University has been founded by the Foundation for Revitalization of Local Health Traditions (FRLHT) Trust and has evolved from 21 years of its pioneering work. Unlike conventional universities, TDU gives equal importance to research, education and translation/outreach/application of knowledge for societal change. One of the focuses of this university is to preserve and share Indian traditional health practices, such as the use of herbals in the veterinarian practice.

### *PENHA - Uganda*

PENHA is a network - and its work covers all part of the Horn of Africa where there are pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. Our work is with pastoralists, where they are. Much of the time they are only living and moving within one country - but in some cases, they move backwards and forwards across national boundaries. Furthermore, the issues faced by pastoralists and agro-pastoralists in the different parts and countries of the region can often be the same. In some cases, pastoralists in one area have dealt with issues or used the environment they live in inventively and can share their experience across borders.

### *ESAP - Ethiopia*

Ethiopian Society of Animal Production (ESAP) is an Ethiopian Resident Society of professionals of animal production and related fields. ESAP is a multifaceted platform and knowledge hub of animal scientists, policy makers, researchers and academia, farmers, pastoralists, and private sector working in the sphere of animal agriculture for overarching goal-sustainable and resilient animal agriculture in Ethiopia.

### *Participants exchanges April / May and 2014*

NLF and TDU have been organising exchanges together before, in 2015 (visits to India by Dutch, Ethiopian, and Ugandan professionals and visit to Ethiopia and Uganda by Indian and Dutch professionals) and 2014 (visit to India by Dutch professionals). Most of the Dutch professionals that participated in these earlier exchanges have been involved in the organisation of the return visit to the Netherlands in October 2015.

### **1.3. E-motive evaluation research**

This report is part of a three-year long research project of the Oxfam Novib E-motive program funded by the DEAR program of the EU. Initially the emphasis of the program was on Northern participants learning from colleagues in the global South. The idea behind this focus was offering an alternative to the traditional power imbalances between the global South and North in development cooperation. In the first year, the effects on the Northern partners were thus the central topic of the research: To what extent (and how) does the exchange program affect the Northern participants behaviour, attitude and knowledge about global interdependencies and the effectiveness of development cooperation in addressing common global issues?

After a review of the first year of studying the program, it became clear that the effects in the South (i.e. empowerment, network strengthening) should also be researched, in addition to the effects in the North. These effects in the global South had not yet been empirically studied. E-Motive wanted to develop itself into a new model for development cooperation, in which cooperation, equality and mutual inspiration for solving global problems are central. E-Motive wanted to involve the South on a more strategic level and wanted to offer partners worldwide an online platform where knowledge can

be shared. E-Motive needed to know if and how Southern partners want to be involved at these levels. The role and effects of E-motive in the South was the thus focus of our research in year two.

The third year of the research focuses on mutual learning and the sustainability of the learning relations. Having studied the two main assumptions of E-motive in Year 1 and year 2 we now wanted to see whether or not mutual learning and sustainable learning relations take place within or as a result from the exchanges. What works and what doesn't when it comes to changing perceptions and exchanging local solutions? In brief: what makes mutual learning happen? By studying two exchanges (one in the South and one in the Netherlands) we identified good practices and barriers to mutual learning and sustainability of the program. This report concerns the exchange in the Netherlands, in September – October 2015. The insights will provide a more solid base and recommendations for future exchanges in the E-motive program, and also enhance the sustainability of the program.

#### *This research*

Within the E-motive research so far, the focus has been on learning by the professionals involved in the actual exchanges. We concluded, amongst others, that careful selecting of participants might enhance the learning experience. But E-motive also aims to have a bigger influence on society. The projects it supports do not only influence the professionals they work with, but may also have an influence on a wider public that surrounds those individual professionals. Professionals that have a wide (professional) network may have more opportunity to spread their experiences and lessons learned than professionals without such a network. In this research we will therefore pay attention to the background of participants and their role in (professional) networks. Research question 1 concerns these aspects:

1. *What are participants backgrounds and (professional) networks and do they intent to use their professionals networks?*

This research is limited to the target group of participating professionals. We have not studied actual effects on the wider public, only the participants sharing of knowledge as means of communicating these influences.

In an earlier study on the exchange in India in the spring of 2015 the focus was on learning in three themes: the mutuality of learning, the sustainability of learning and differences in learning between specific types of professionals. Additionally, unexpected results concerned learning about development cooperation; development education among professionals (Hogeling & Carabain, 2015). Although this previous research was a good source of information about mutual learning, it was somewhat difficult to measure the extent of professional learning on the long- term. In the current research, there were more possibilities to study the long-term effects of an exchange. We will therefore also focus on the question of sustainability of learning. This is described in research question two.

2. *To what extent does the exchange promote long term mutual learning and sustainable involvement among participants?*

We expect that a few conditions must be met to enable North – South and South – North learning on the long term. From previous research, we've learned that professional learning is amongst others facilitated by matching and meeting of peers, by sufficient time for interaction and by the absence of language barriers and the presence of an open attitude amongst participants. We are now looking for factors that either facilitate or hinder mutual and long term learning within this E-motive exchange. Beforehand, we assume that factors such as matching of peers, time and organization of the exchange not only influence professional learning in general, but also may influence the opportunities for long term North – South learning.



Photo: Participants during a tour of a Dutch veterinary clinic.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The research has been executed by means of a mixed method approach. Researchers collected information by interviewing participants and by participant observation during the exchange. Additionally, in the last group session in which all participants were present, a short evaluation survey was handed out by NLF. Answers to these questions are also used as input for this report. The study was conducted between September 27 and October 4 2015.

### 2.1. Interviews

In the initial research design, interviews with all participants were supposed to provide the majority of the information for this evaluation. Due to time constraints, we were only able to conduct four interviews with participants. A topic list was drafted for these interviews (see Appendix A).

### 2.2. Participant observation

The researchers participated in the exchange visit in The Netherlands as well as in some additional activities. On the first day of the exchange, the researchers introduced themselves and explained their role during the week. They explained their observations of people, organisation and processes during the activities. Also during the exchange itself they explicitly made clear that they were researchers investigating processes within the exchange. The researchers composed a topic list for observations before the activities, but room was left for taking note of unexpected events and personal experience of the activities. Overall, there were two parts of the project that the one or both researchers actively participated in:

- a. Preparatory meetings in The Netherlands; preparatory communication via e-mail and WhatsApp;
- b. The exchange itself; all activities as programmed by the NLF, including a starting session and a closing, evaluation session with all participants

### 2.3. Questionnaire

Information about the participants' perception of the exchange was gathered through a (written) questionnaire. At the last 'official' meeting during the visit that all participants attended, they were asked to fill out this questionnaire. Twelve participants filled out the questionnaire. The questionnaire is attached in Appendix A.

### 2.4. Limitations

This research has some limitations. The most important one concerns the interviewing of participants. Due to unforeseen time constraints, it turned out to be very difficult to conduct interviews during the exchange. The programme barely left any room for anything else than the scheduled activities. In the spare time, participants also needed time to prepare presentations, discuss amongst each other about the exchange and work on other (individual) projects. Of the planned fourteen interviews four were conducted with key informants in the project. To overcome this limitation, information was additionally gathered through a (written) survey among participants on the final day of the conference. Also, a closing session with participants was used to discuss some of the survey questions. These two 'methods' replaced the information that couldn't be gathered through interviews.

During the preparation of the exchange, NLF and the researchers agreed that the researchers would host the last meeting in the exchange in order to gain data for their study. The researchers were somewhat surprised when project staff handed out a questionnaire that contained questions about the exchange to all participants the night before the ending session. Therefore, the meeting could not take place as planned. The topics of the questionnaire and the meeting were the same and



participants were clearly not willing to invest time twice for the same information. The questionnaire was not drafted by the researchers, but by a representative of Natural Livestock Farming. Questions would have fitted the evaluation better if they would have been formulated by the researchers. Since almost all questions in the survey were framed in a positive way this might influence the answers. Participants were not particularly stimulated to think about negative aspects of the visits or things they would like to change in possible future visit. It is wise to keep that in mind when interpreting the answers to these questions. We will add data from the interviews and participant observation to give a more balanced overview of the results. Additionally, not being able to interview all participants and working with a survey that was not conducted by the researchers themselves influenced the focus of the questions that were asked to participants.



Photo: one of the workshops in the international symposium.

### 3. RESULTS

In this chapter, the results of the research are presented in two parts. The first part (3.1) focuses in the participants' background and network. This will provide insight into possibilities for spreading the lessons learned, thus extending effects of mutual learning beyond directly involved participants. The second part (3.2) focuses on the sustainability of (mutual) learning and involvement after this E-motive exchange.

#### 3.1. Participant background and network

The information about participants network is mainly gathered through the interviews, through information that was distributed before the exchange by NLF, by participant observation and by desk research.

Participation in the exchange was not equally divided among the three involved countries. Out of the fourteen people that participated in the exchange, nine came from India, three came from Ethiopia and two from Uganda (Table 2). Some participants have been involved in the network from the start, others were relatively new. Some had participated in the exchange in their respective countries (being a host for visiting participants) but had not yet been travelling to the Netherlands. Others had not been involved in the NLF-TDU partnership at all. All participants had a prior interest – professionally or not - in reducing antibiotics in the dairy sector<sup>2</sup>.

The participants in this exchange are academics, veterinarians, farmers, teachers, private sector representative or a combination of these roles. So there is quite a variety in professions and roles within the group.

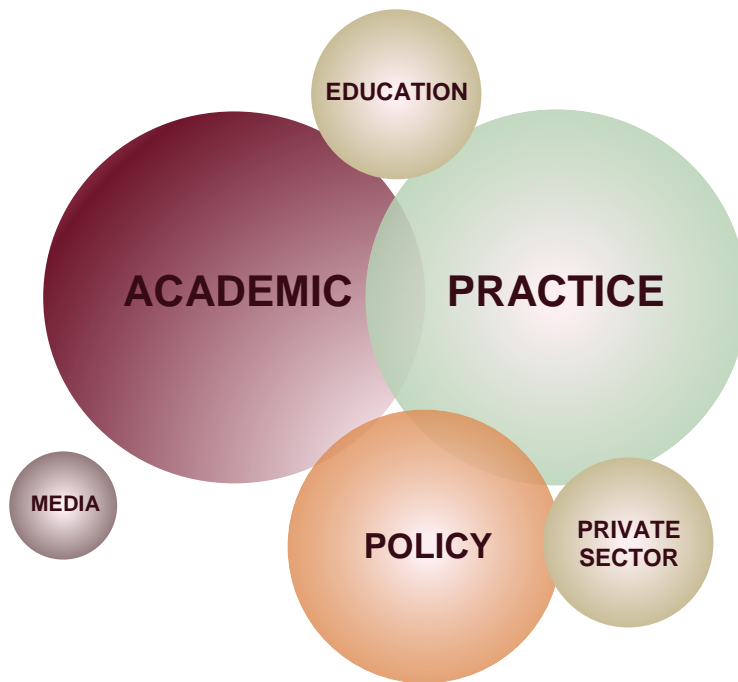
**Table 2** Participants professional background

Role / profession
veterinarian / Ethno Veterinary practice expert
veterinarian
farmer
teacher
veterinarian / expert in breeding
veterinarian
professor / Ethno Veterinary Practice expert
secretary national society of animal production
director national society pastoralists / farmer
veterinarian / dairy consultant
managing director milk factory
president national society of animal production
journalist / television producer
scientist

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<sup>2</sup> One person from India joined the group as a family member of one of the participants during most of the activities, but was not directly involved in reducing antibiotics. Her visit was not paid for by the programme's budget and we therefore do not regard her as a participant in this research.

The participants' (professional) networks vary, but can be generally categorized as networks in the academic scene, among policy makers, among practitioners (farmers, veterinarians, production), in education and in the private sector (Figure 1). Nine out of fourteen participants are 'active' in more than one type of network. Also nine out of fourteen participants have a professional background in either the academic scene or among practitioners, or in both. Only one participant has a network in media, two in education and two are directly related to the private sector in their networks.



**Figure 1** Overlapping professional networks of all participants (India, Uganda, Ethiopia). Larger circles stand for more participants in that specific professional network.

#### *Intentions to use one's own network*

From the participant observation, interviews and answers to the questionnaire we collected information about participants intention to share the lessons learned in their network. One of the questions in the survey was 'What will you do with these experiences when you get back home?'. Eight out of twelve participants mention in their answer that they will share the lessons learned in their respective networks back home in one way or the other. So in general there appears to be a commitment to spread knowledge and use networks after the exchange. The following quotes illustrate these commitments:

*"Group discussions with farmers and discussion with government level if possible"* [participant 03]

*"A class will be arranged to farmers regarding health & management practices"* [participant 06]

*"Strengthening the network we have back home (...). Disseminate the message across our network in Ethiopia"* [participant 08]

*"I am going to engage the technical people (both vets and human doctors) on the issue of antibiotic use and resistance"* [participant 10]

Another question in the survey that may relate to the use of participants professional networks was 'How do you think the NLF international network should proceed?'. Five out of twelve participants mention in their answer to this question the (indirect) use of participants national networks. This is illustrated by:

*"The knowledge gained in the dairy sector should be gradually implemented to other livestock sector also"* [participant 02]

*"We can do because we have a huge network and system of contacts"* [participants 03]

*"The network needs to implement these good ideas with the community and other stakeholders. (...)"* [participant 10]

#### *Participant observation and interviews*

As researchers we observed several things that relate to the (use of) participants networks during and after the exchange visit. They are:

- One of the participants was actively sharing her experiences during the exchange week with her network back home in a WhatsApp-group. She used photos and text to share her experiences and the interactions that took place. In activities and meetings, this participant paid attention to what her network would be interested in, and so made her experiences available directly for a wider group. In this way, people that are not involved in the exchange or even in the partnership are directly profiting from the knowledge exchange.
- There are also some observations that indicate that the participants' background plays a role in the activities and experiences from their own perspective and background. During the whole week, the researchers observed a lot of active interest from the participants in their encounters with peers in the Netherlands. On one of the days, one of the researchers noted down:

*"The atmosphere among the participants is good. [the host farmer] has a very clear story, and the participants are very much involved in her story. They ask a lot of questions, actually all the participants with all the different backgrounds have different questions."*

- Another observation concerns the use individual networks by the Dutch participants involve in this exchange. All Dutch participants have actively contributed to the organisation of at least one of the activities in the exchange week. Often, they have used their individual (professional) networks to organise a visit, invite specific interesting people etc. The following researchers observation illustrates this:

*"In the afternoon the group visits the [activity]. I am there a bit early so I get to talk to [the Dutch participant] who hosts the session beforehand. She seems exited to have the visitor in the faculty, and has put effort in it to invite some relevant colleagues as well. In addition to the group, at the beginning of the meeting, there are also colleagues present."*

*[about the meetings in The Hague] "This day shows again the importance using existing networks."*

- The international conference enabled the participants to meet more peers and share their knowledge. Almost 160 people participated in the conference that was donated by the local authorities of Overijssel. They shared knowledge in a formal way by organizing and participating in workshops and plenary sessions, and informal during the breaks. Invitations were sent to

contacts of Dutch participants and NLF staff. In this way, the Dutch network was used and also broadened by involving people in the partners progress.

All in all, we found evidence that participants from all countries involved in the exchange are very willing to use their professional and personal networks. We've witnessed participants updating their networks 'at home' during the exchange, participants employing their network in preparation of the activities and participants taking the initiative to actively discuss ways to exchange newly learnt knowledge with their respective networks outside of the E-motive network.

### 3.2. Sustainable mutual learning and involvement

The information about mutual North – South learning and sustainable involvement in the North-South cooperation is collected by means of all methodologies that are used in this research.

To start with the questionnaire, almost all questions relate to learning and further involvement in the partnership. They are 'What are the three major insights you have gained during this visit?', 'How would you describe this week has benefitted you as a person?', 'How would you describe this visit has benefitted your organisation?', 'What will you do with these experiences when you get back home?', 'How do you think the NLF network should proceed?' and 'How do you think your national NLF network should function?'. We discuss indications in the answers to these questions one by one.

*What are the three major insights you have gained during this visit?*

When asked about their major insights, participants answers vary in the extent they relate to learning. We have focused firstly on whether answers indicate learning in general. We find that there are three types of answers when it comes to learning.

- Firstly, some participants focus on the more technical things they've learned during the exchange. For instance the handling of milk and milk quality, animal management, Dutch structure of the dairy sector and concepts of sustainability of organic milk in the Netherlands. This is illustrated by the following quotes from the answers to the questionnaire:

*"The excellence in animal management by the famers"* [participant 11]

*"On the veterinary: very modern clinical service. It is very marvellous. Every care is taken to achieve animal welfare".* [participant 07]

*"A composite farming system could be more sustainable"* [participant 01]

- Secondly, participants mention insights that indicate learning and reflecting on one's own situation and context. This might be understood as a higher level of learning than the first, more technical spreading of knowledge. The following quotes illustrate this reflection on one's own situation:

*"Farmers need to be oriented well if someone has to change to a new farming using different types of animals (Toyota vs Ferrari driving)."* [participant 05]

*"Breeding our indigenous livestock should be priority not only for safeguarding biodiversity but also to get genetics for crossbreeding."* [participant 09]

*"[famers in participants country] need to change their mind-sets of taking farming as part time if they are to maximize returns"* [participant 10]

- The third aspect of learning that is mentioned by participants concerns learning about the structure of the exchange programme, thus the structuring of the learning itself. This is illustrated by the following quotes:

*“Exchange of knowledge & experiences is a practical way of solving individual country challenges”* [participant 10]

*“There is a lot to learn from each other, knowledge to be gained from South to South assistance”* [participant 08]

*“The exchange program is innovative way of learning”* [participant 08]

When we look at answers that indicate an intention for future North – South cooperation and learning, there are only the last two comments that indirectly relate to duplicating the experience in the future.

For further indications of sustainable learning we now look at the answers to the questions ‘How would you describe this week has benefitted you as a person?’, ‘How would you describe this visit has benefitted your organisation?’ and ‘What will you do with these experiences when you get back home?’. In general, a lot of respondents mention aspects of learning in their answers to these questions. They report on the visit as being inspirational to them, and creating awareness and giving them new knowledge. Regarding their organisation of professional roles, they indicate that they will inform and train colleagues, share in relevant networks etc. The following quotes illustrate this:

*“Visiting, meeting the people brings me more confidence, encouragement, motivation”*. [participant 03]

*“As a researcher and clinician I can take the facilities available in the vet institutions of Netherlands and how we best can utilize the same”* [participant 02]

However, comments that indicate sustainability of mutual learning are more sparse in the answers to these questions. We find only a few comments that relate to North – South learning in the (near) future. And the ones we do find are mostly only indirectly pointing at future North – South cooperation. Although it may seem that this indicates an absence of future involvement in global learning, it is important to note that the survey questions were not designed to give insight in this particular matter. Quotes relating to this aspect are:

*“Opportunities for collaboration with NL for assisting in the development [of a] herbal formulation”* [participant 05]

*“As individuals we can learn so much, not only from the people in the developed worlds but also from one another as developing world. South South cooperation”*. [participant 09]

*“Need to learn more from Dutch – to have a regular interaction / exchange programme (...)”* [participant 11]

*What will you do with these experiences when you get back home?*

When looking at the question ‘What will you do with these experiences when you get back home?’ we again find a lot of indications for learning in general by the visiting group and for multiplying of learning in their respective networks. Almost all participants mention in one way or the other that they have learned something, which they will share with their network or use in their day-to-day work in their home country. This is illustrated by the following quotes:

*“We do incorporate some of these lessons learned in our training program”* [participant 04]

*“Class will be arranged for farmers regarding health & management practices”* [participant 06]

*“Disseminate the message across our network in (...)”* [participant 08]

In the answers to this question, we find only one comment that indicates sustainability of North – South or South – North learning, which is:

*“We will again try to work together for furthering the cause of our health program which will be the future health policy”* [participant 04]

When focused on the actual future of the network, participants are of course commenting on future cooperation. On the one hand, the North – South cooperation is really seen as the strength of the programme:

*“Sharing of ideas and views between the nations is the strength of the program”* [participant 02]

*“I suggest that the NLF network should be the window for North-South collaboration”* [participant 04]

*“Continue the exchange visits with new learnings”* [participant 08]

On the other hand, respondents comment on the need to grow the network to new countries and stakeholders:

*“The network needs to implement these good ideas with the community and other stakeholders. The outcome will then be shared with other countries to expand and grow the network”* [participant 10]

*“We need to continue to involve many more actors (individual organisations, donors and other interested. It is a good start but many who would like either to debate for or against it should join.”* [participant 07]

### *International symposium*

On Thursday the 1<sup>st</sup> of October an international symposium was organised. Over 150 people registered for this full day event in Zwolle. Location and catering was sponsored by the Province of Overijssel, one of Natural Livestock Farming’s partners. Figure 2 gives an overview of the symposium programme, where the morning agenda consisted of plenary sessions and the afternoon of two rounds of workshops and a plenary closing session.

Two researchers participated in the symposium, and joined the group for an informal dinner at a nearby farm in the evening. With regard to (the sustainability of) mutual learning there are a few results from this active participation and the participant observation during the conference:

- The symposium programme indicates that there was room for the Southern participants to share their knowledge and experiences during the day. They had a role in the plenary sessions (for instance a panel session) and were all participating as speakers in one of the workshops (see for example highlighted sections in Figure 2). One of the researchers even observed that during a workshop ‘close to no relations are made towards the Dutch situation’.
- In the days before the symposium, there was confusion amongst participants about their role and responsibilities in the symposium. There were indications that participants would have liked to know earlier what was expected from them during the symposium. One of the explanations for this confusion was that the workshop programme was not finalized until a day or two before the symposium. The NLF representatives did take time to finalize the workshops with participants and thus clear up confusion.



**Figure 2** Programme of international symposium on Green solutions for reducing antibiotics. (source: Natural Livestock Farming).

- The list of registered participants for the symposium shows a variety of representatives from organisations and institutions the Netherlands and abroad. There were people attending from commercial organisations (animal feed, dairy sector etc.), scientists from universities and other scientific institutions, representatives from (local) authorities, representatives of networks and initiatives that focus on sustainable agriculture and individual professionals such as farmers and veterinarians. This broad interest shows growing interest in reducing the use of antibiotics in the dairy sector and indicates a growing network for NLF in the Netherlands.



- The Dutch participants in the exchange in April / May 2015 were actively involved in the symposium in Zwolle. They either facilitated a workshop, were booked for a plenary session or spoke during one of the workshops. One of the participants from the exchange in 2014 hosted the informal dinner in the evening at his farm. This involvement shows sustainable involvement in the project of Dutch participants after the exchange in spring 2015.
- One last observation considers the contribution of the representative from NLF. This representative's role appeared to be very supporting and important during the symposium, specifically when it comes to matchmaking between Dutch professionals. We observed the representative actively bringing together people with matching backgrounds that may have a common interest, and thus creating opportunities for future cooperation and broadening of the network within the Netherlands.

#### *Participant observation and interviews*

As researchers we've observed several things with regard to long term learning.

- We asked ourselves, looking at the programme during the week, did the various activities and visits and the way they were organised facilitate long term North – South (and the other way round) learning? We've observed **several opportunities for long term North – South learning** in the programme. Visits were planned to a range of organisations and institutions (see Table 1), giving all different participants the possibility to meet peers; people with similar professional backgrounds and matching interests. Thus farmers had the opportunity to meet farmers and visit farms, veterinarians were able to meet Dutch vets and a Dutch veterinary clinic, for educators and scientists there was the possibility to have a discussion with Dutch scientists and a representative from a milk company could learn from a milk quality organisation. The parallel sessions (for instance on Tuesday and Friday, see Figure 3) enabled participants to choose activities and meetings that matched their respective interests and backgrounds. One small remark is that the balance between different types of meetings and interactions could have been a bit better, since the amount of farm visits was a bit much.

Second positive observation about the programme is that Dutch participants and NLF used their networks to involve more interested experts on the different levels. Bringing together peers – people with similar professional backgrounds and matching interests - is an important condition for peer-to-peer learning. The abovementioned analysis of the programme indicates that this condition for peer-to-peer learning has been met.

Date	Activity
Sun. Sept 27	<p><b>Afternoon meeting:</b> Brief introduction on background Dutch dairy farming // Program planning // Kaleidos Research (introduction on evaluation research) // ITV film // Project formulation // Film Thom: Milk Dilemma in Africa</p> <p><b>Evening:</b> Prepare presentations // Review film text</p>
Mon. Sep. 28	<p><b>Morning:</b> Farm Visit // Animal Health monitoring</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> on farm</p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Visit to Veterinary faculty Utrecht</p>
Tue Sep 29	<p><b>Group 1 The Hague</b></p> <p><b>Morning:</b> Meeting at Oxfam Novib (The Hague)</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> meeting Oxfam with film Milk Dilemma in Africa</p> <p><b>Afternoon Meeting</b> at Nuffic (The Hague)</p> <p><b>Group 2 with VKON</b></p> <p><b>Morning:</b> Farm visit on trails with herbs</p> <p><b>Lunch</b> at VKON</p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Meeting with veterinarians &amp; Dier en Kruid working group</p>
Wed Sep 30	<p><b>Morning:</b> Visit to conventional dairy farm with low/no antibiotic use</p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Information and tour at Qlip laboratory // discussion about milk quality control at Qlip</p>
Thu Oct 1	<p><b>Day:</b> Symposium Zwolle</p> <p><b>Dinner:</b> Participants and Dutch participants at farm one of the Dutch participants</p>
Fri Oct 2	<p><b>Group 1</b></p> <p><b>Morning:</b> Visit to 2 dairy farms</p> <p><b>Group 2</b></p> <p><b>Morning:</b> visit one farm</p> <p><b>Group 1 and 2</b></p> <p><b>Lunch:</b> at farm</p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Farm visit + lessons learnt</p> <p><b>Dinner:</b> at the Farm with local produce and cultural performances</p>
Sat Oct 3	<p><b>Day</b> in Amsterdam: Consumers and markets for organic in Amsterdam</p>
Sun Oct 4	<p><b>Morning:</b> Meeting evaluation of visit – including Kaleidos Research</p> <p><b>Afternoon:</b> Voluntary visit to local market /</p> <p><b>Dinner</b> with Board Natural Livestock Farming</p>

**Figure 3** Programme of the exchange for all visiting participants.

- On the other hand, we also observed that some aspects of the exchange might have **hindered long term mutual learning**. If it were only professional learning on the spot, meeting a peer and exchanging knowledge would be sufficient. But if one wants to establish long term learning relations between Northern and Southern participants, more is needed. More time to 'get to know each other', to learn about similarities and differences and to find mutual interest and initiate further cooperation. Also, a more intensive encounter needs focus. In the current exchange, there was usually a lack of time for more intense encounters between, and the groups was too big to have a one-on-one focused conversation.

- We observed **active involvement of Dutch participants from the spring 2015 exchange** and the 2014 exchange in the preparation of the exchange and during the exchange week. This active and relatively long-term involvement from nearly all Dutch participants is an important condition for long-term learning. Given the fact that participants were enthusiastic enough to invest time in the project, we didn't observe much North – South learning outside of the actual exchanges. In between the visit to India in spring 2015 and the return visit in the Netherlands in September / October 2015, a lot has been organised by the Dutch participants. And indirectly we've heard about developments amongst the groups in India, Uganda and Ethiopia. But it seems that there haven't been any initiatives worked out or applied by an international combination of participants. As far as we can judge, communication between the different groups was mostly limited to the representatives from the partner organisations, mostly TDU (India) and NLF (the Netherlands).

- One initiative that shows long term involvement, willingness to invest and opportunity for broader international cooperation and long term learning, is **the organisation of the Ethno Veterinary Practice (EVP) training course** (Figure 4: 'post graduate diploma courses in The Netherlands and India). This initiative of a training course has been launched in an earlier stage of the project and evolved around the idea of teaching interested professionals about alternative ways to reduce the use of antibiotics in the dairy sector. Knowledge on EVP from India will be the main input for the course, and North – South cooperation is essential for its development and implementation. Experts from India and the Netherlands have to work together to create a course that includes knowledge and practices relevant and applicable in the respective cultural contexts. Additionally, peers have to work together and use their own networks to identify possible students and investigate their learning needs. One of the workshops in the symposium was successfully used for this purpose. And by involving Dutch veterinarians as well as Indian experts a real, North – South and peer-to-peer cooperation initiative is in the making.

#### Box 5. Natural Livestock Farming initiatives in Netherlands, India, Ethiopia and Uganda

##### Netherlands:

- Developing herbal recipes for mastitis prevention in cows and diarrhoea prevention in calves;
- Developing post-graduate diploma courses on herbal medicine for Dutch veterinarians combining Indian and Dutch knowledge
- Developing dairy farming strategies with low – and zero – antibiotic use
- Strengthening breeding expertise of local breeds for example Frisian cows

##### India:

- Community-based enterprise development for producing herbal medicines
- Organic dairy chain development with dairy companies
- Post-graduate diploma courses on the use of medicinal plants and ethno-veterinary medicine

##### Ethiopia:

- Community- based cattle breeding programs;
- Strengthening animal management strategies for dairy systems based on local breed and cross-breed cattle
- Documenting and assessing ethno-veterinary practices

##### Uganda:

- Community-based Ankole breed conservation, including marketing of niche products
- Documenting and assessing ethno-veterinary practices

**Figure 4** Cut out from NLFs Policy brief on the transition to natural dairy farming, No. 1, October 2015.

## 4. CONCLUSION

In this fourth chapter, we return to the two research questions that were introduced in the introduction. When summarizing the results, what are the answers to those questions?

### *1. What are participants backgrounds and (professional) networks?*

Participants' backgrounds are diverse. Indian, Ugandan and Ethiopian participants have their own professional and often overlapping networks in academia, policy, agricultural or veterinary practice, education, the private sector and media. Also, we found that in general amongst participants there appears to be a commitment to use these networks after the exchange. There are plans to share the knowledge from this exchange in various ways, discussing it with peers and colleagues, creating awareness, using the information in classes and training etc.

Even though the research focused mainly on the foreign participants, we do have findings about the Dutch participants in earlier exchanges. With regard to networks, it appeared that they have often used their own (professional) networks to contribute to the organization of one or more activities during the exchange week.

### *2. To what extent does the exchange promote long term mutual learning and sustainable involvement among participants?*

The results indicate that **a)** learning during the exchange week does occur, that **b)** there is long term involvement from participants in earlier exchanges and that current participants are willing to be involved in the future in reducing antibiotics, but that **c)** in general North – South and South – North learning is limited to the actual exchanges or to project staff interactions.

#### **a) Learning in the exchange**

Our data show that participants gained roughly three types of knowledge from the exchange visit. They have learned about ore technical things related to antibiotic reduction and dairy production in the Netherlands. Also, participants mention insights that indicate learning about and reflecting on one's own situation and context. The third aspect of learning concerns learning about the structure of the exchange programme, thus the structuring of the learning itself.

#### **b) sustainable involvement**

The results indicate that participants from earlier exchanges (e.g. Dutch participants who have been to India, Ethiopia or Uganda) have been inspired to prolong their involvement in the project after their exchange experiences. Also, current participants are inspired to be involved in future efforts to reduce the use of antibiotics in the dairy sector, to share their knowledge with their networks and to initiate activities that support this sharing of knowledge and create further awareness of the issue.

#### **c) Long term mutual learning**

Our results show that mutual learning – in which Northern participants learn from Southern peers and Southern participants learn from Northern peers – is generally limited to the exchange weeks and activities. In between activities, direct contact between Southern and Northern participants appears to be limited. One positive exception is the organisation of a course on Ethno Veterinary medicine for

veterinary practitioners. The process of organising such a course appears to be a longer term collaboration between India and the Netherlands, in which not only NLF and TDU staff but also exchange participants are actively involved.



Photo: at the international symposium.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

From the conclusions, we hereby formulate four recommendations for organising an exchange that aims to stimulate mutual long-term learning among professionals.

1. Provide **fitting and relevant exchange options for all participants**. Adjust the programme, the activities, the peers they are to meet, to the different 'types' of people that participate in the exchange. Use designs such as optional parallel activities or careful selection of peers to cater different participants at the same time.
2. Related to recommendation 1, take care of **sufficient time** for these kind of peer-to-peer meetings in the programme. In depth exchange and learning needs time.
3. Invest in ways to **keep in touch** for participants after the exchange. Possible and accessible forms are an online platform via an existing tool such as a LinkedIn groups or organisation's website. Social media (WhatsApp groups, Facebook) provide accessible options to keep in touch that can be started during the actual exchange. Such forms have been in use by for instance Dutch participants, but may be useful tools for peer-to-peer learning on a global scale.
4. Motivate participants to set up **concrete initiatives** (e.g. in communication, in research (experiments), in lobbying) together with their *international* peers, and not only in a national setting.



Photo: participants visiting a Dutch farm and writing about and discussing cow's health.

# APPENDIX A TOPIC LISTS

## A. Topic list interviews with participants

### A. DESCRIPTION OF TARGET GROUP / PARTICIPANTS

1. What is your occupation? What organisation do you work for? What is your role in this organisation?
2. Personal: Do you have any personal affiliation with the subject of antibiotics reduction? Are you personally involved in the subject? Active involvement or just interest? Why?
3. Can you describe your (professional/personal) network regarding antibiotics reduction?

### B. EXPECTATIONS AND KNOWLEDGE BEFORE EXCHANGE

1. How much did you know about the antibiotics problem prior to this exchange? (for Africans, better to speak about 'loss in biodiversity' instead of antibiotics?)
2. Last Sunday you shared your expectations, what to bring and what to learn, about this exchange. Were these expectations met?

### C. EXPERIENCES DURING EXCHANGE

1. What are your experiences so far; what did you perceive as positive learning experiences in the exchange? What made those experiences so successful? What were negative learning experiences? What hindered learning in these experiences?
2. Are you receiving all the knowledge you were hoping to gain in the exchange? Why?

### D. SUSTAINABILITY (AFTER EXCHANGE)

1. Do you expect to implement the knowledge you've gained during this exchange in your day-to-day work? If yes, why and how. If no, why not?
2. Do you expect to share the knowledge you've gained during this exchange with your colleagues? If yes, how and what knowledge? If no, why not?
3. Do you expect to be able to share the knowledge you've gained during this exchange in your (professional) network? If yes, how and what knowledge? If no, why not?
4. Do you expect to be able to implement the knowledge you've gained during this exchange in your personal life? If yes, how and what knowledge? If no, why not?

### E. MOST SIGNIFICANT CHANGE

Could you tell me what has impressed you the most during this exchange? There are no limitations answering this question, just what impressed you the most. Why?

### F. OPEN / COMMENTS

5. Are there other things that this exchange has given? [open question, unintended effects, ask in an open way; additions to interview, additional comments and experiences etc.]

**B. Questionnaire participants closing session (drafted by Natural Livestock Farming representative)**

1. What are the three major insights you have gained during this visit?
2. How would you describe this week has benefitted you as a person?
3. How would you describe this visit has benefitted your organization?
4. Do you have suggestions for improvements of these visits?
5. What will you do with these experiences when you get back home?
6. How do you think the NLF international network should proceed?
7. How do you think your national NLF network should function?
8. Any other remark or observation?