

**Dr Julie Newton** has a background in human geography, gender analysis, sustainable development and social development. After completing her PhD on “Gender responsive approaches to natural resource management in Namibia” in 2004, she joined the Wellbeing in Developing Countries (WeD) ESRC research group as a Research Officer at the University of Bath. The primary aim of WeD is to “develop a conceptual and methodological framework for understanding the social and cultural construction of wellbeing in specific countries”. Its experimental use of a range of research methods has sought to explore the ways in which poverty, inequality and people’s perceptions of their quality of life are dynamically interlinked in different communities, in four developing countries (Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Thailand and Peru).

At WeD she was responsible for coordinating the ‘structures’ component of WeD methodology which locates WeD’s research sites within regional, national and global structures of power, exchange and information and explores how these influence agency and wellbeing outcomes. She was directly involved in the analysis of the role of structures in Thailand and Ethiopia. Another of Dr Newton’s primary responsibilities was the communication of WeD research to academic, policy and practitioner networks in the UK and overseas: she has coordinated the WeD toolbox, is editor of WeD working papers and newsletters. She also provides additional expertise to the WeD Ethiopian team on the analysis of gender relations and their implications to the social and cultural construction of wellbeing. Julie undertook additional research in Ethiopia on the effectiveness of gender mainstreaming structures in place.

In 2007, she was one of the first researchers to be awarded an Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) placement aimed at transcending the research/policy/practice divide by improving effective communication and knowledge transfer between the public, scientists and policy makers. Through the placement she was seconded to the UK government’s Sustainable Development Unit within the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to advise on how to integrate a wellbeing approach into sustainable development policy. The UK Government’s Sustainable Development Strategy (*Securing the Future*: 2005) recognises wellbeing at the heart of sustainable development and committed the government to explore the role of an explicit wellbeing focus in policy making and to develop national wellbeing indicators. She is a member of the UK Government’s Whitehall Wellbeing Group and Wellbeing Indicators Group and has assisted in leading the drafting of a common understanding of wellbeing across government and the development of wellbeing indicators.

Relevant links:

<http://www.welldev.org.uk/>

<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/what/priority/wellbeing/index.htm>

Contact: [julieajnewton@yahoo.com](mailto:julieajnewton@yahoo.com)