Author's response to reviews

Title: The role of NGOs in global health research for development

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Response to Reviewer Sally Nathan

February 8, 2005

We very much appreciated the comments provided by Sally Nathan on our paper. Our responses to the five major points are outlined below:

1. We have clarified the introductory comments on pages 5-7 and 21-26 to reflect the fact that the subsequent sections are our cumulative thinking. (Of course, we have benefited over the years from discussions with many colleagues.)
   Please see changes to pages 5 and 21
2. Some quotes obtained from our interviews with NGOs have now been incorporated into the text. We agree that this strengthens the paper.
   Please see changes to pages 10, 19, 20, and 21.
3. The section headings have been clarified to better reflect the section content. It was not our intent to have the illustration cases form a continuum. Instead, each case highlights a unique research contribution. We attempted to include cases that were varied, from different continents, from different types of NGOs, and that demonstrated a unique contribution to scientific knowledge. We hoped that by spacing the cases throughout the section, it would punctuate the variety and relevance of the different types of NGO research contributions.
   Please see changes to page 14
4. The paper by Nathan et al is appropriate to add to our discussion and we thank the reviewer for bringing it to our attention. It, in fact, substantiates the point we made on page 6 and so we include it as the reference citation.
   Please see the new reference # 20 added to page 6 (and to the reference list, page 32. Note that all numbers after 20 have been changes in both text and in the reference list.)
5. We have had a long debate about the figures. In the end, we decided that the paper was better with them than without them. Figure 1 intends to describe the link between research and development through advocacy. Research can have many endpoints but it is through advocacy, which extends the policies and programs, and the capacity building, which ultimately impacts on development. Figure 2 is a representation of the research process, highlighting the specific activities in which NGOs have been, and continue to be, most involved. We would still like to see these figures included, if possible.

We highlighted the changes in yellow for your convenience. We look forward to finalizing the paper with you.

Yours sincerely,

Hélène Delisle