Challenging Ignorance: what we do not know about development and change

Version 2

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This file is a draft of an earlier version of Part 1 of this book. In the final version, which should be published later in 2017, this section will be a bit shorter. The introduction will be revised to reflect some of the events of 2016. Some sections will be cut and pasted into other sections of the book, in particular the section on gender and development will be used as a case study of the navigation of a contested knowledge space. To give some idea of what is planned the table of contents for this section is followed by a draft table of contents for the final version of the whole book. As with nearly all other IKM Emergent Material, this is made available on a Creative Commons, Attribution-Non-commercial-Share Alike 3.0. License

Because this may be published on a variety of platforms, page numbers have not been included. It is suggested that references, if any, are made using the section and paragraph numbering provided. This of course only applies to this version of the text and will be different in future versions

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Challenging Ignorance: what we don't know about development and change – Version 2

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Challenging Ignorance: what we don't know about development and change (proposed table of contents for Version 3, Dec 2016)

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Part 1. Some Starting Points

1.1 Introduction to the book[1]

1. We live in a time of many changes. Some relate to today's problems, especially economic ones, which have an immediate impact on our lives. Some relate to the wider world and the changing power balances within it. Some relate to the future as we witness it, emerging from the present in our personal and working lives and, even more markedly, in the lives of our children. No-one, we think, understands these changes or the choices they offer in their full width and depth. We therefore live with great uncertainty, not a little anxiety and, we will suggest, nothing like enough hope.

2. 'We', throughout this book, mean the authors[2]. We were both born and bred in Northern Europe and continue to live there. The main impetus for writing this book comes from our involvement in a five year research programme, IKM Emergent (IKM), which tried to understand and to suggest improvements to the dynamics of international development, what it tries to do and how it does it. This programme involved people and ideas from all over the world but has, at heart, been an Anglo-Dutch collaboration. We do not assume that we talk for anyone else, even for the programme as a whole, but we would expect many of our colleagues and our fellow citizens to share our frustration at collective failures to address the profound challenges our societies face or to embrace new opportunities.

[1] Note: This was written as an introduction to the previous version of the book. It needs updating and I have also cut some of the 'what is coming' section as it will no longer be coming in exactly the same form

[2] Brief bios and pics of us on facing pages

3. Many of these challenges have a global character. By no means all are negative. Changing dynamics of economic and political power offer opportunities for a more balanced and diversely constructed world order. Migration, the professional and social potential of new Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) and the amount and the increasingly global character of trade and science all offer the potential for better communication, for seeking common solutions to the many common problems that the world faces.

4. These, of course, remain legion. The percentages of those living better and longer than their parents across the world have improved incredibly but, at a time of still growing population, the absolute numbers living in abject poverty remain horrific[3]. Years of political platitudes and clichéd images may have dulled our understanding of what this means. Billions of people live with bad or non-existent housing, poor nutrition, insecurity, lack of access to health services or to any form of meaningful legal redress in the face of the many violences done to them. As important is the related lack of opportunity and the difficulty in fully participating in the familial and social networks, which affirm life. Even the positive trends generate serious threats. Growing prosperity and reduced child mortality, at a global level, puts additional pressure on already fragile environmental and climatic conditions. Mass migration, often generated by lack of opportunity and insecurity, can lead to new poverty and new social tensions, even when the often dreadful perils of the journey have been survived[4]. ICT make the functioning of

[3] Note on actual numbers - Lieshout/ OECD/ World Bank

[4] We started writing this before the really sizable movements and fatalities amongst Syrian refugees and others heading to Europe in 2015. It is important to note that there are also significant movements of people fleeing insecurity in the Horn of Africa and South East Asia as well as countless others, labelled as economic migrants, who are seeking not wealth but the

whole societies dependent on fragile electronic infrastructures, as well as offering opportunities for a wide range of criminals and extremists. More fundamentally, progress on resolving damaging and deeply rooted conflict and social violence in many locations across the world has been very limited.

5. These opportunities and these challenges should remind us that we are living in an increasingly inter-dependent world. Much of this inter-dependence was created by and for the benefit of nations in Western Europe and North America. Whatever debates there might be about how the many pressing issues we face should be addressed, there is an absolute need to work together to do so.[5]

6. Here, in Europe, the great majority of citizens enjoy a standard of living far better than that experienced by most of the world's population. That does not protect them from anxiety about these global challenges or the stresses on their own societies. Recovery from the near economic meltdown of 2008 remains fragile. Improvements to the liquidity, the regulation and the incentive structure of the financial markets have been slow, piecemeal and, according to many observers, insufficient to prevent future calamities[6]. The Eurozone has recovered some stability without yet creating either the economic or political conditions for resolving its long term imbalances. Social inequality increases in virtually every EU member state. After generations of steady development, public services and welfare systems are everywhere under attack. Unemployment, especially of the young, undermines solidarity and hope. Democratic politics and, especially, politicians are subject to widespread mistrust and lessening public engagement. Alienation,

basics of survival.
[5] Note: Reference to Lieshout and his main point
[6] Quotes

precariousness, austerity and disempowerment are the order of the day.

7. 'Things cannot go on as they are' has been the accompanying chorus to the financial crash of 2008 and its many aftershocks, yet the elites that sung the song have shown little desire or capacity to change. Or rather such change as there has been has served to demand more of the same, to reinforce existing power relationships, to undermine and subject to centralised control the spaces in which new ideas and different practice may emerge. Resistance to real change is, no doubt, related to the ruling elites' wish to preserve their power and wealth relative to the rest of us. That is what elites try and do. However, they are supposed to have another role: that of providing purposeful direction. This, it seems to us, they are now, at least in the G7/G8 countries, entirely failing to do. This, we would suggest, may not be only the result of their own self-interested choice. It is at least possible that the dominant political, economic and media elites are so immersed in the internal logic of their own dynamics[7], and they have so internalised them, that they have simply lost the capacity to think and act in other ways. They may, in an echo of earlier critiques of the role of elites in newly independent countries[8], be unable to fulfil their role of providing purposeful direction. Unfortunately they have not lost much of their power to prevent others from doing so. The *nomenklatura*[9], which dominate

[7] In chapter xx we describe this logic as a lethal mix of centralised control and an ersatz variant of neo-liberal ideology, which reduces every aspect of life to monetary value. 'Neo-liberal' is often used simply as an adjective alongside an assumption that readers will share at least a common understanding of what the word means and possibly share a critical attitude towards it. We think both the meaning of the word and its true implications as an approach to human life and culture need to be made much more explicit, which is something we attempt to do on page xxx

[8] We reflect more on this argument, with reference to the work of Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral, in Part 3

[9] This word was used in the former Soviet Union to describe a governing strata of society which was isolated from the realities of life as lived by ordinary people, lived according to an internally set and policed set of

the higher echelons of society and its institutions, collaborate to restrict voice, influence and opportunity to those with who are not trusted to uphold the prevailing orthodoxy. Our countries are therefore stuck in turgid stasis, unable to respond to the many global challenges in ways which help themselves, let alone the wider world. Even less are they able to do so in ways which enhance the values - freedom, democracy, opportunity - that they claim to defend and embrace, any more than their counterparts in the Soviet Union were able to achieve social and economic equality and justice. In saying this, we are in no sense entering the realm of party politics. In the UK and the Netherlands, which, however globally we try to cast our thinking, remain our home environments, it is sadly the case that this argument covers all political parties with any chance of getting elected.

8. Parallel to this failure to respond to opportunities within their own societies, the same elites are shaken by the extent of global changes. Globalisation as a system of capital accumulation, they can readily understand and indeed cleverly manipulate the systems inherited from centuries of imperial domination to their short term interest. Globalisation as a set of new and possibly more equitable international relationships leaves our elites flummoxed. Deeply wedded to a Western-centric outlook[10], with all its associated feelings of superiority, our elites - political, economic, academic, cultural - struggle, often with far more difficulty than the general population, to adapt to a post-colonial future. The result is often bad

attitudes and rules, acted in its collective self-interest and denied freedom to others - all attributes of current Western elites.

[10] Note: Later we suggest that the centuries of European domination and of the imposition of European rooted models of knowledge have led to a situation where most Europeans, perhaps especially the elites, have lost the capacity to see outside their own ontology: a capacity that many others, obliged to pursue their education within different languages and belief systems than those they were born into, possess. *Reference where discussed in detail*

policy, unproductive relationships and missed opportunities.

9. This analysis and its implications are, of course, highly political. It is impossible to believe that a world - or its constituent societies - that has successfully overcome the actual and foreseeable challenges it faces, will not have witnessed massive political changes in the process. However, we have little to offer debates about what form these changes will take or how they will come about. This is partly because we make no claim to be experts on the nuts and bolts of politics but also because we believe that both science and society are going through processes of emergent change. These are, by definition, unpredictable. New and unforeseen possibilities, including political possibilities, emerge from the process of change itself and these, in turn, shape what happens next. In other words, the political choices which will make possible the successful societies of tomorrow will become apparent through - or, in one terminology, be the emergent properties of - the process of change itself.

10. Which leads us to the heart of what we want to write about. Is it possible to think, act and organise in ways that are more likely than the current norms to meet the challenges that we - individually and collectively - face? We think it is. Such profound change in how 'things' are understood, ordered and managed, in how 'things' can actually be conceived and done are not only necessary, but possible and, to a far greater degree than is generally recognised or explicitly debated, already taking place.

11. If change is necessary and change is unpredictable, does this mean that all change is to be welcomed, that any change is a good idea? Our answer here is an emphatic no. First there is the question, sometimes a question of choice, of the pace of change and the

capacity of societies to adapt to it[11]. Then there are the questions of who is provoking change and why. Some change emerges from muddle and chaos, which is perhaps inevitable if not always necessary or desirable. The rest comes from thought, discussion and intent. That intent may be negative: to pursue selfish goals at the expense of other people and communities. Even positive intent can take many forms, which may not all be experienced as positive by everyone affected. Thus there is a clear need for clarity as to the goals to which any proposed change is intended to contribute. The explicitness and , to remember the political context in which we work, the honesty of intent allows an informed discussion about the desirability of the intended goal as well as an assessment of whether a particular activity is in fact having the intended effect in contributing towards that goal. We make clear our own intent below (1.1.20).

12. This book is one exploration of how people are working in new ways to face the many challenges in front of us and in the process, in what is seldom defined but may overlap with our own statement of intent, trying to make the world a better place. Such explorations could have many starting points and follow a variety of routes. One way to start is to try to understand the intricacies of current circumstances, how they have come about and what can be done to move on from there. Such immersion, however, might plunge us back into the same logic and debate, conflicts and confusions which have led to such a mess in the first place. Yes it may be broken, but we are not trying to mend a broken system. Instead, we want to start with our construct of the world: how we see it, not someone else. We want to step back and think how things

[11] Insert: 'Accelerating change has become both addictive and intolerable. At this point the balance among stability, change and tradition has been upset; society has lost both its roots in shared memories and its bearing for innovation' Ivan Illich, Tools for Conviviality

could best be done in this world as we understand it. Later, in Part 3, we will return to think about the implications of any new practice for old norms and for prevailing ideologies.

13. Our entry point is knowledge. A lot is said about living in what is becoming a knowledge society, feeding and feeding from a knowledge economy. What does this mean? What is this knowledge and how is it created, managed and applied? Who defines it, who owns it? Is there only one model of knowledge society or knowledge economy or are there choices that can be made? More fundamentally, are we really talking about knowledge or what may be considered its opposite, ignorance? We look at the array of problems waiting to devour us, and want to ask 'what do we know about how to make the world a better place'? Faced with our history, the multiple social and economic challenges of our own societies, how well do we, at this moment, understand the processes of change in Europe, let alone anywhere else? The answer, as is evident to anyone who reads a newspaper or listens to our political or economic leaders, is not very well at all. Strikingly, and in contrast with previous crises, no-one in power - or even close to challenging for power - is able to offer even the most minimally convincing account of how things might get better. We all, it seems, just don't know. We are ignorant. But is this a problem? Is ignorance in fact the opposite of knowledge, or is it the humbling but challenging source from which the excitement of productive knowledge creation can flow? We explore this further in 1.10 but the title of the book may give some idea of our approach.

14. These questions can be applied to modern life in general but also to many specific challenges within it. Our own reflection on these issues is largely located in the contexts of international co-operation and ‘development’, a complex idea which we express in

inverted commas until we get to explain the differences and relationships between local change processes and external support in 1.6. Such work, at least overtly, aims to minimise and overcome the effects of humanitarian disaster, combat poverty and misery, and to promote economic, environmental and social well-being. These have been the areas in which we have worked and studied for many years, which is one reason for our choice. Exactly what such work does, could or should involve will be examined critically in 3.y. At one level, given the global situation described above, these can be seen as crucial areas of human activity. At another, it is our contention that much current practice in this sector offers a case study of the ignorance, arrogance and self-interest of existing elites and the institutions through which they work, as they seek to act on social and economic processes which they cannot understand. More positively, in terms of knowledge, culture and the range of challenges they pose, international co-operation and 'development' also lend themselves to a study of new possibilities for work in an incredibly rich and diverse environment. Often both global and local, the work crosses boundaries of class, gender, culture, language and discipline. As such, it can generate chaos, conflict and stress but it also offers enormous scope for dialogue with diverse perspectives and approaches and thus to the insight and creativity such dialogue can inspire. *(?McQuillan quote*) Thus whilst, we hope that this book will be of particular value to those working in or supporting processes of international co-operation and 'development', we believe that much of its content will shed light on similar challenges being faced in many other areas of life. In particular we share with colleagues in other areas which are supposed to generate 'public goods', such as health and education, the near impossibility of working to high professional standards in an ideologically hostile environment. This is one reason we feel it important to place our work in its full context. Too many critiques of the present or ideas for the future have been

convincingly argued within the detail of their own subject areas or 'professions', including 'development', only for their wider implications to disappear without trace in the systems of interest and ideology in which the bigger decisions are made. We try to relate our ideas and our suggestions for new practice to the daily realities of those working in a particular sector – 'development' – and, more widely, to the choices they pose for the political economy of which such work is part.

15. This book is emphatically not 'all our own work'. It seeks to build on previous critical thinking both about knowledge and its links to development[12]. Even in the IKM Emergent research programme, of which we were the co-directors, we acted more as 'managing editors'. Our job was less to control the work of others than to connect and make sense of it, and this continues to be our role here. Part of this sense making involved listening to and understanding the significance of the contributions made by the programme's many participants to its output. This output will be referenced throughout the book and can also be explored in its original form at ikmemergent.net/documents. In particular we have benefited from continuing collaboration after the formal end of the programme with Kemly Camacho, of the Sula Batsu co-operative in Costa Rica and with M.J.R. David, a pioneer of community radio in Sri Lanka. Kemly has been elaborating the specific challenges of working within an emergent paradigm in her knowledge based work with local communities in Central America. Michael has been exploring how different knowledges compete and co-exist with each other within the knowledgescapes of everyday life in India and Sri Lanka. Their work may be published as a companion book but is anyway present on the IKM web site. A second aspect of making sense of the IKM

[12] Notes: List some key works – Marglin, Wageningen guy, Polyani, Beyond Method etc.

programme involved trying to understand the dynamics of the programme itself – of how we were working, of how and why work in the programme was different from previous work experience and how, and why it continued to evolve. We explore this as a case study in section 2.6.

16. The new practices and approaches we describe have many different roots. Some represent manifestations of new theory, be it of academic or political origin. Some are the result of endless experimentation and tinkering with work in practice. Many come from the choices of people, grounded in local knowledges and cultures across the world, who may have not had the freedom to do things the way they'd rather in the past or, if they had, what they were doing was not understood or given credence by outsiders. Other new practices are generated by the constant interaction with new information and communications technologies (ICTs) which, often in different ways in different places, affect us all.

17. So, this book is about knowledge, change and international development. That is a big subject. You can imagine the kilometres of weighty tomes detailing the study of so many technical subjects and so many places; satellites capable of reporting on the water content of every corner of every field; hard disks stored on top of still bursting filing cabinets crammed with survey results, draft plans and reports from lengthy overseas trips and meetings, endless meetings, down on the hot and noisy street trying to make sense of completely different lives or calmly discussing 'modalities' with other suits in air conditioned rooms. Organising and making good use of all that is the important and, very often, still to be achieved domain of traditional knowledge 'management'. We, however, want to go further. Alongside the many problems, we are also aware of new ideas and new practice, emerging in many places from widely different

realities. At the heart of them all are new (at least to us) conceptions of knowledge and science, new practice in their generation and sharing, new uses and, potentially, new modes of production. At least in embryo, we can see the possibilities of new models for knowledge societies, more democratic, both open and free and grounded in existing human values and human rights, and offering a variety of economic opportunities for the many, not just the few. If this is the case, then, as with other major historical transformations, it will inevitably be found that all this 'newness' has its antecedents in scientific and literary work, in cultural expression and social experiment dating back many years.

18. These are the areas we will explore in these pages. How knowledge can be seen not as an object, still less a commodity but is created as a key part of processes aimed at achieving goals – be they commercial, cultural, social or, as in most of the examples we will discuss, developmental - in dynamic interaction with the societies that it shapes and is shaped by. We are not, however, in the business of providing definitive answers. Neither IKM Emergent nor this book make any pretence of being comprehensive. Indeed, one core argument of the book is that even within quite narrow academic disciplines let alone on the stage of global realities, the volume of potentially relevant knowledge far exceeds any person's – or any group of persons' – capacity of absorption and response. It is not possible for us, or anyone else, to know everything or to have read everything on the subject. We have therefore only been able to think and write about what we know about. Second, however much we lean on ideas and insights generated by others, especially the many people who participated in IKM, and try to reflect their views fairly, we are still offering our own perspectives. As we will explore further on, these perspectives are inevitably influenced by our culture and gender, as well as on our individual life experiences. It is a feature of

the knowledge processes we are trying to describe that had any of the twenty or so other people who both contributed significantly to IKM and stayed with it through its life written this book, the end result would, for all the many likely commonalities, be markedly different. So this is an exploration not a prescription. It is an exploration in which anyone can participate, from whatever starting point. We invite our readers to do so, and to share their thoughts.

19. Finally, our conclusions call for some fundamental changes in how 'development' is conceptualised and done. This is not based on any simplistic notion of us being right and others being wrong. Nearly all the participants in IKM have worked a long time in some part of the 'development' sector or its knowledge supporting institutions. Most, including us, have worked within the practices we now criticise and made the same mistakes. We have then had the unusual privilege of being supported to stand back and look at and think about what is done and how it is done. This book, along with the many other outputs of IKM, is what we can offer in return. We hope it is part of a common journey of trying to make things better.

Our Own Intent

20. Earlier (1.1.10), we suggested that clarity about the intent behind any proposed line of thought and action contributes to transparency about what is going on. It also offers people one way to assess what then happens - has it helped or hindered progress towards that intent. We, therefore, need to be explicit about our own intent, about the directions in which we hope the changes we are discussing might take us. Obviously in real life many actions and their accompanying intent will take place within a very specific situation. However, to the extent that much of what we will be describing involves work that may be within or which is intended to

shape the public sphere, some statements of general intent can be made.

- We have a strong preference for collaborative approaches to work in all domains, including the commercial. In the public sphere this manifests itself in a desire to extend democratic practice, in particular to enable and facilitate forms of participative democracy in which citizens (including the 'beneficiaries' of 'development') can become directly engaged in processes which affect them.

- We look towards an equitable, sustainable and substantially poverty-free world order. We see no absolute value and a lot of difficulty in absolute equality but recognise that massive disparities in wealth are socially, culturally and, in the long run, economically harmful.

- We think it important that the injustices and achievements of the past are recognised and remembered but also believe that, if acknowledged, they can be gradually transcended as new relationships, driven by shared challenges and opportunities, develop between the world's peoples, cultures and knowledges on bases of better understanding and mutual respect

- We believe that greater gender equality would improve the quality of life for everyone. We do not understand this in terms of a fixed relationship between rigidly defined entities but in a dynamic sense of the freedom to explore and redefine gender identities at societal and individual levels in ways with which the people concerned are at ease. We seek equitable relationships between all such identities. This will take us a long way beyond a kind of lowest common denominator equality based on existing

patriarchal relations and gender stereotypes.

- Whilst agnostic about precise means of organising economic activity, we see a need for credible and equitable regulation to protect the integrity of markets, the direct interests of consumers and the human rights of labour. We see social as well as economic value in having diverse paths of innovation and opportunity, as opposed to an economy dominated by a small number of big players. We recognise, in many places and in many forms, historical and current, the existence of the commons which we think of value on both instrumental and intrinsic grounds

- We believe in the values of freedom of expression, thought and practice and in the role of law, fairly and equitably applied. However, we also believe these values can be strengthened by tolerance, awareness of and sensitivity to historic differences and openness to dialogue.

- We believe that if human beings do not look after the planet they live on, no-one else will do it for them.

- Implicit in our intent is a belief that working with others always has the potential for mutual benefit. Where development support is aimed to help others, it should do so in the spirit of solidarity rather than charity or, except in extreme circumstances, any inherent notions of being better placed to know what to do.

21. Frankly, this list sounds a bit middle of the road. It is hardly radical. Indeed, it might not look out of place on the corporate responsibility statement from a company wishing to appear mildly progressive. But then there is the difference between vague

aspiration and serious intent. The effect of achieving these aims would certainly have a radical effect on many lives. The main point here, however, is not to argue about which intent is best but simply to be clear about what we are aiming towards. Do the many ideas for different thought and practice we will describe contribute to these aims? As critically, have the bulk of mainstream economic and political policies introduced in Europe since the financial crises of 2008, been intended to contribute to similar aims – in which case it can be argued that they have been incredibly ineffective - or have they been directed at a completely different, and possibly disguised, intent?

Structure and Form of the Book

22. The book is written in three parts. Part 1, Some Starting Points, starts with this introduction and then introduces the core concepts which underpin our understanding of the actual realities of the world in which we live and of the processes of development (change) in it. These concepts form the basis on which much of the rest of the book is based. We start by emphasising the importance of 'Complexity, Emergence and Simultaneity' to understanding the contexts of contemporary realities. We then look at how the meaning of the word 'knowledge' is changing in 'Core Concepts of Contemporary Approaches to Knowledge'. An even more obvious theme of current change is the rapid introduction of new technologies, particularly those relating to information and communication (ICTs). As with knowledge, issues relating to these technologies will feature throughout the book but 'New Technologies: Miracles or Mirage' highlights a number of critical questions about the relationship of technologies to social and political processes, whatever their setting. This is followed by 'Understanding Developments', an assessment of what it is that

people are or should be actually trying to do when working in the international development sector and by 'Communications and Development Support', which addresses the communications priorities of the sector. Gender, Knowledge and Development', then looks at pioneering contributions made to the whole area of knowledge and development, and some of the challenges and constraints faced, by the various strands of thought directing attention to the connections between gender and development. Throughout we emphasise the importance of individual agency and 'Individual Challenges and Organisational Response' considers some of the implications of new ways of working for us all as individuals. Finally, 'Challenges of Ignorance' explores the various contexts of ignorance and explains why we think it can be understood not just as an obstacle to be overcome but as a potential source of inspiration and creative endeavour.

23. Part 2, 'Creative Landscapes of Emergent Change', outlines what it might mean to work in the development support sector in ways which are better attuned than those we pursue now to the actual realities of the world in which we live and to potential processes for development (change) within it. In the process we aim to tease out possible approaches and methodologies which may have wider application in the contemporary world. We start with 'Mapping a Development Knowledge Ecology' which seeks to identify the many knowledges and knowledge roles which contribute to processes of development and considers the relationships between them, including issues of translation and traducture. Knowledge does not exist independently of people. People change knowledge and knowledge changes people. 'The Human Dynamics of Working with Emergence' explores a number of approaches which can stimulate open, collaborative and mutually beneficial processes of knowledge creation, exchange and use.

24. Innovation in such processes inevitably poses questions about the definition, role and style of more formal research, including academic research, both within societies in 'development' and about them. 'A Revolution for Development Research' considers how formal research can be reorganised to really support the 'developments' for which its research funding is allegedly justified. Again, a detailed look at what happens and what could happen in the development support sector raises questions relevant to research in many other settings.

25. Research involves communication at every stage from the original framing of its agendas, through the process of gathering and discussing evidence, to the production, dissemination and debate of its output. We thus look at the some of the means used to communicate and to explore, especially those artefacts which can be seen as communications of record: that is communications which publicly present research, analysis, actions or intent for which the creator takes responsibility. Whilst long established means of communication such as books, refereed articles or formal reports retain their status as the documents of 'official record', a mass of other communications artifacts from big data visualisations to tweets are becoming increasingly visible and, arguably, dominant in terms of their audience and impact. The relative merits of the large range of options now available are seldom openly studied or discussed even within a particular location or discipline. There has been even less interest in how different artifacts are used and understood in different cultures, something which is fundamental to development communications which are, by definition cross-boundary. 'Artifacts and their Curation' attempts to make a start in filling this gap.

26. All the issues discussed in this part of the book pose many challenges for managers, especially those trained and accustomed to

working in the seemingly more measurable and controllable contexts of linear change. 'Managing in an Emergent Environment' considers both what 'management' involves in this context and discusses some of the methods which may be applied. Finally, 'IKM Emergent: Emergence in Practice' presents a case study of our own research programme, not from the perspective of the research itself but from that of the experience of its participants and its management. It is not being proposed as any sort of ideal but it may offer some useful insights to others interested in working in more open ways.

27. Our main interest in all of this is in how to work more effectively – and, if possible, more enjoyably – on the issues relating to 'development' and sustainability which affect us all. It would, however, be naïve to ignore the challenges that new ways of working pose to existing ways of doing things and the patterns of wealth and power on which they are based. Part 3 looks at the implications of the main parts of the book for politics, economics and societies more generally. It attempts to identify the main barriers to change but also how working in new ways could contribute to overcoming or bypassing these barriers.

28. One feature of IKM Emergent's work was its desire to experiment with ways in which we try to communicate knowledge. Some of this is described in 2. 4, 'Artifacts and their Curation'. This also explains the somewhat experimental form of the book.

29. We also want the book to have the capacity to develop. We are circulating drafts of the book to some of the people most actively involved in IKM Emergent and hope that the book's design will allow us space to incorporate related material which they may wish to contribute. We hope it will be possible, in the e-version at least, to do the same with contributions from the readership more widely. To

make it easier to navigate and comment on the book as it appears in different paper and digital formats we have hit on the startlingly un-original idea of numbering chapter and verse in a vaguely biblical fashion.

1.2 Introducing our Approach

1. What we present here and in the next few chapters is a range of concepts, approaches and methods which have the potential to be component parts of an improved practice. They are not all new by any means. They are not all complete as ideas or capable of exact replication. They have not all come from us or from other participants in the IKM Emergent network or, indeed, only from our field of work. There will be many others of which we are not aware, or yet to be developed. Some, for example such as those participatory methodologies which try to involve those most affected by change in the change process itself, have grown as a result of a deliberate and articulated intent. Others will have evolved as a pragmatic response to particular situations and may later have been theorized and replicated. Together they form a body of emergent practice, growing on the carcass of the old, with the potential, we believe, to coalesce into something newer and more exciting than the component parts.

2. What combination of methods should be used in which way will vary according to the situation people are in and what they are trying to achieve. There is no simple right answer. It should however always be a conscious choice. After years of ever narrowing straightjackets telling us how everything must be ordered, including supposedly participatory research methodologies and, sometimes, even their anticipated results, the prospect of having a choice is liberating. It may not be easy but it can be fun. It may be compared to the role of Jazz in freeing music from the constraints of the conservatoire (and in the process revitalising the old as well as creating the new). However, with this choice comes the responsibility for a critical awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the choices available and for accountability for the

choices actually made. Being capable and prepared to take such responsibility is, to recall a recent call for greater professionalism in Dutch aid practice[13], what being professional actually involves.

3. Despite their range, we think that the ideas we describe here enjoy some common features. We believe they all contribute at some stage to iterative processes where ignorance becomes knowledge becomes action, is learned from and stimulates new knowledge and new questions again. Second we believe everything we will describe in this part of the book relates to at least one, often more, of three broader concepts: emergence, knowledge and personal agency. Continuous and applied awareness to all three can, we suggest, form the foundation for a new practice.

4. Everything we will talk about takes place within a certain context. We are not, in our many critiques of current practice, in any sense opposed to the use of traditional positivist research methodologies, in which the researcher aims to be a detached observer of whatever is being studied, when these are appropriate for the research questions being posed. However, nearly all our questions relate to the interactions of people, with all the messiness that involves. Furthermore, as our subject is that of 'international development', our interest lies in the interactions of people within and between virtually every human situation on this entire globe. Central to our approach to our subject is an understanding that everything anyone, including us, thinks or does is in some way connected to the culture – or cultures – of which they are part. We will return to this assumption in many guises during the book but it may help to clarify some core aspects of our approach at the outset.

[13] Note: Reference to Book and to discussion of it later in this chapter

5. Firstly we take a very broad definition of culture which includes not only forms of expression but shared rules and values, ways of knowing and ways of giving meaning to what is known. Culture is neither static nor transient. On the one hand it is always deeply rooted within a society. On the other, it is constantly evolving both in relation to changes within a society and in response to the interactions the society has with others. (Cabral, Nyere, Eno)

6. Second, we seek to be alert to and critical of the many ways in which knowledge (and the cultures of which it is part) relate to power. This includes the old fashioned understanding of power as being something that comes out the barrel of a gun. At the heart of 'development' is a history which saw first countries in Western Europe, and then the United States and Japan as well, attempt to dominate large parts of the globe. This has happened using a variety of means and with differing levels of success from about 1500 to the current day. Indeed, there is an active debate as to whether 'development' is a continuation of this process or an antidote to it. Some regard a constant harking back to the evils of colonialism to be passé, to be a weak excuse for the many failings of post-independence governments. Oddly enough, no one seems to argue that race is no longer a political issue in the United States on the grounds that slavery has been long abolished. The fact is that the history of colonialism shaped and continues to shape notions of politics, 'progress', social status, knowledge, and education both within former colonies, former colonial powers and many of the institutions of international governance and trade, including those concerned with 'development support'. We are therefore obliged to return repeatedly to the impact of this history on contemporary knowledge and thought.

6. Knowledge also has, at least in the eyes of some, its own

internal hierarchies of power, which can relate to class and gender as well as to culture. In one such hierarchy the 'pure reason' of the detached observer (or, in a different context, the Brahmin) is held to be superior to the knowledge of those of the rest of us mired in the drudgeries of daily life. Similarly the intellectually based epistemic knowledge of the faculty is perceived as superior to *techne* – practical knowledge – gained from the experience of hard work. Hierarchies of knowledge and power exist in most cultures. However, in the context of international development in this 'post-colonial' world, it is vital to recognise that such hierarchies exist between societies and are asserted not only as a reflection of wider power imbalances but on the grounds of the allegedly superior rationality of one system of thought. As Stephen Marglin noted, from his vantage point in the Economics Faculty at Harvard, there is '*an imperialistic pretension to universality made on behalf of Western episteme and the total inability of its adherents to regard competing systems with anything but contempt, the inability indeed even to contemplate the existence of competing systems. Other systems of knowledge, particularly when they are embedded in myth and ritual, become superstition, the very antithesis of knowledge'*[14].

7. An open, logical and, if we may say so, professional approach to an exploration of the connections between knowledge and 'development' cannot start with any assumption of the superiority of one form of knowledge over another. However such an approach poses its own challenges. It is not enough to take disembodied 'facts' from one system and interpret them within the logic of another system. If we are to have any understanding of the relative merits of different systems, we have to seek to understand the meaning of

[14] Note: Stephen. A. Marglin, 'Towards the Decolonization of the Mind' in Appfel-Marglin and Marglin (eds), 'Dominating Knowledge: from development to dialogue', Oxford University Press, 1990, page 25

those 'facts' within the logic, values and intent of the knowledge system of which they are part[15]. As we all exist within our own knowledge systems, this can be a very difficult leap of understanding to achieve.

[15] Insert: For example, traditional midwifes in the Zimbabwean Province of Manicaland, make extensive use of a herb which, on analysis, contains high levels of Oxytocin, a hormone which can induce labour. As such a Western trained midwife would have no difficulty in interpreting the use of that herb as being analogous to the way they might use various drugs in their practice. However, without a Far deeper understanding of how the use of the herb relates to other aspects of the practice of traditional midwives, there is no way of knowing whether that analogy is correct or whether the traditional practice as a whole has been understood.

1.3 Complexity, Emergence and Simultaneity

1. We increasingly understand reality through the lens of complexity[16]. This does not mean that every aspect of reality is complex and needs to be managed as such, but that reality as a whole is. This, for us, growing up in bi-polar worlds of capitalism and communism, modernism and tradition, has been an understanding which arrived fairly late in life[17]. Once it had, it has helped us to make sense of some of the problems we had previously experienced with other more linear or deterministic models - in both the political and managerial domains - for understanding reality. It also represents a complete change of understanding, similar to moving from an understanding that the world is flat to one that it is a globe. To continue the analogy, neither of us have the necessary scientific background to prove, in positivist terms, that the world is a globe or that it is complex. Neither idea, however, represents a choice. Once we come to that understanding, they just are.

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[16] Insert:
We take the fact that the world is a complex place as a given throughout this book. We understand this to mean that:

- Human reality is constructed through the interactions of semi-autonomous agents, which themselves, if we consider entities such as states or social classes are constructed of semi-autonomous agents.
- This interactions create social structures and frameworks of behaviour which can exist in states of near equilibrium for long periods of time but can also change very quickly in relation to internal and external shocks
- Changes are likely to be unpredictable and not follow linear pathways
- The continuous interaction of agents generates emergent properties, new opportunities or constraints, which can then become stimuli for further change

That the world is complex, does not mean that every component part of it is complex, that nothing is linear or simple.

[17] Note: We first gained an understanding of the issue through our interest in the growing power of networks as a means of sharing and evaluating information and as a form of organisation. See for example Powell, M. 'Information Management for Development Organisations', Oxfam Publications, 1999, p 20

2. Contrary to some post-modernist, post-historical thinking, accepting that reality is complex does not, we believe, mean that humans cannot take deliberate, collaborative actions to change it. It does not mean that the various 'isms', for good or bad, have lost all impact. It does not mean that there are no longer dialectical tensions between opposing or divergent forces. It simply means that we understand the environment in which such tensions play themselves out in a different way. It is complex. It is, even though it can experience long periods of stability, inherently unpredictable. Doing ***a***, we are finally coming to understand, does not automatically mean that ***b***, ***c*** and ***d*** will follow.

3. The shift to understanding social and economic change in terms of complexity is widespread, if far from complete. There is now a substantial literature on the subject both on its general framing and on some very specific illustrations of how this new understanding might affect our practice[18]. Some of this, in our view, is inadequate or misses the point. For example notions such as 'taking complexity into account' or 'making use of complexity' imply an almost optional extra ingredient which can be added to the mix without essentially altering it. This approach seriously underestimates the degree of change in our thought and practice which accepting complexity demands.

4. Another approach is to try and understand complexity in terms of complex systems, which, as systems, have their own patterns of behaviour and logic. This approach attempts to re-create in the human sphere, the sort of understanding of 'the rules' of complexity as some claim to have found in the far longer established research on complex systems in many life sciences. We are doubtful

[18] Insert: ? Annotated bibliog of some key texts - such as Patton, Ramalingan 2013, Mowles????

about how far this approach can take us. Yes, a lot can be learnt from studying phenomena in the context of the systems in which they may operate[19]. However, we do not believe that all aspects of human life can be classified simply in terms of their roles within systems. There is life and experience outside of systems too. The fact that 'systems' has very often to be written in the plural is also important. To understand a phenomenon in terms of its function in one complex system may be possible, if by no means easy. To do so when it is evidently part of - that is influences and is influenced by - a number of different complex systems may be beyond possibility[20]. It would be easier to try and spot the sunflowers in a Jackson Pollock painting.

5. Our preference is to understand complexity in social contexts not as another example of the scientific understanding of complexity and complex systems achieved in very different contexts of life sciences but as a metaphor for it. The metaphor can possibly extend to some commonly observed features of such work - 'semi-autonomy', 'phase transition' etc. - but it is a mistake to think that there is an existing body of knowledge or method which can be simply transferred from life sciences to the social sciences and thence to the sphere of social action. Instead, the metaphor encourages a recognition of the frequently complex nature of the social issues with which we try to engage. It informs our approach. It raises our awareness of what to look for, that the chains from cause to effect may not be direct or linear. It reminds us of the importance of open-minded enquiry to explore new or unlikely patterns of events or interactions. However, once these adjustments have been made, the change is arguably complete. Most people start a piece of work

[19] Note: We especially recognise here the role of some more flexible approaches to systems analysis such as Checkland's work on 'Soft Systems'
[20] Insert: Example from public health or pharma industry

by trying to understand the reality in which it lies. This will remain the norm. The differences are simply that the process by which we do so will have changed and, it is hoped, that the quality of our understanding might have improved somewhat as a result.

6. Now already but more so over time, all sorts of methods and approaches will be developed which will claim to bring rigour and structure to work on complex problems. A general capacity to work in such a way could - and needs to - improve. What we think is unlikely is that this will mask the fundamental challenge which complexity theory poses to how we understand our world. We are moving from believing that it is possible to know certain subjects in their entirety to realising that, except in the most limited of specialisations, it is not. Definitive and certain knowledge of a phenomenon is not a realistic possibility. Ignorance, uncertainty and unpredictability are inevitable. Yes, there is much that can be done to be ensure the best information and the most appropriate thought is applied to any particular issue, but this contextualises our uncertainty and ignorance, it does not remove them.

7. Much scientific work over the past few centuries and much modern management theory is premised on there being 'a solution' which the painstaking analysis of evidence or well-designed organisational structure will reveal. This may often be true, albeit within limits. However, complex reality also encompasses many situations where there may not be 'a solution' or, if there is, there may be no means of actually knowing which option was probably best for many years to come. Such situations are sometimes defined as 'wicked problems':

> *Rather than involving a linear pathway of reasoning from a current state to a defined and stable outcome, a 'wicked'*

> *problem is characteristically fluid and unstable. There is no one way of articulating what the problem is; indeed, there are usually multiple perspectives on both what the starting point is and what the end point should be, let alone widespread disagreement as to its causal roots. There is no 'right' answer to a wicked problem, in the sense of being able to determine a viable solution based on objective measurement and testable hypotheses; there are only competing ideas and arguments about possible courses of action that may lead to better or worse outcomes. Moreover, once an action has been taken, the parameters of the problems shift; you can't step into the same 'river' twice. '*[21]

Julian Jenkins juxtaposes 'wicked problems' with 'tame problems'. These are problems which may not be easy but which respond more clearly to cause and effect and do offer definitive solutions which, unlike those of wicked problems, are likely to be repeatable. He goes on to argue that after centuries of increasing success in resolving tame problems, many of our most pressing contemporary challenges appear in the form of wicked problems and these require a completely different approach. We would agree, particularly with regard to processes of 'development'.

8. In Western thought and culture, there is a strong tradition of seeing the world in terms of opposites - good or evil, right or wrong, man or woman, gay or straight. We do not think this is helpful in the analysis of complex situations. It should no longer be a question of 'either or' or, 'if I think this, I cannot think that'. The possibility of 'as well as' exists, as does the possible absence of 'correct answers' at all. There is also a need to recognise and address paradox: that is the situation where two contradictory positions may both appear to be true[22]. Historically, within

[21] Note: Julian Jenkins, 'Things can be other than they are.' Understanding the limitations of current management thinking and knowledge practice for work in the development sector , IKM Working Paper no 10, p 13, July 2010. The original description of the term is usually credited to to Rittel, Horst W. J.; Melvin M. Webber (1973). "Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning". *Policy Sciences* **4**: 155–169.

[22] Note: See for example the discussion of paradoxes in an information society in Chapter xx

processes based on linear and right/wrong paradigms, decisions are usually taken to 'pick' and 'support' one side of the paradox and attempt to force its dominance. We would argue that this undermines the value of paradoxes; that is the potential they offer for reflection and for new thought from which new ideas emerge. This may sound very theoretical but it has great practical import. For example, the fact that increasing food production through high input/ high output agriculture can actually increase poverty and food scarcity in the rural areas concerned describes a paradox. The failure to recognise and address this paradox led directly to the Irish Hunger in 1848, the failure of much of the first green revolution (in the 1950s) to meet developmental objectives and, because the paradox remains unrecognised by a 'development' sector which takes no interest in history, is likely to lead to repeated disaster in the current era[23].

9. 'Knowledge' applied in complex, unstable or paradoxical circumstances is not only developed and applied in conditions of uncertainty, it is also time-bound and exists in an interactive relationship with the reality it describes or seeks to affect. It involves understanding that any action within a reality will create change within that reality[24]. The nature of that change and its wider scope and implications may be anticipated but its exact form cannot be predicted with certainty. This applies both to actions of which the person trying to understand the reality is fully aware and, indeed may have initiated, and to other actions taken somewhere else which may

[23] Note: See for example the discussion of The New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition in Chapter 8

[24] Note: Human relationships offer a prime example of this process in action. They are always influenced by what has or has not been said previously. Once something significant has been said -' I love you' or 'I don't trust you an inch' for example - the reality in which the next exchange is received and interpreted is different. Such a process applies to relations on a wider scale - such as between a government and its citizens - as much as it does to relations between individuals.

affect that reality. In development support terms, the rest of the world does not stand still whilst we complete our projects.

10. This leads us to reflect on a less commonly discussed aspect of complexity which is that it is not just that any social environment is occupied by a number of semi-autonomous agents doing their own thing but that they are all doing their own thing at the same time. Thus any social environment in which we are part is not just being observed, analysed and acted upon by ourselves but by everyone else in it as well, simultaneously[25]. If our own responses fail to take note of these continuous and multiple changes then they will inevitably become removed from the reality on which they aim to impact.

11. As Heraclitus supposedly said *'No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man'*. These changes begotten by change are described as the 'emergent' properties of a situation. They can take the form of opportunities or constraints. If their precise form cannot be predicted, the fact that processes of change create new dynamics is entirely predictable. Thus, in our view, alertness and response to emergent properties could and should be a central feature of management in any change processes, such as those which take place within the complex realities of international 'development'.

[25] Insert: We see a direct parallel here with the ideas of the 'Simultaneity' movement promoted by the French poet Apollinaire and primarily associated with the artists Robert and Sonia Delaunay. Examples include a series of paintings of the Eiffel Tower from multiple perspectives and another, whose title of 'Fenetres' mirrors that of a poem by Apollinaire. Another connection between art and poetry offering their own perspective on the same subject can be found in the illustrated poem 'La prose du Transsibérien et de la Petite Jehanne de France', written by Blaise Cendrars and illustrated by Sonia Delaunay. More recently, the Scottish novelist Ali Smith plays with the concept of Simultaneity in her book 'How to be Both'. The book consists of two stories which have an impact on each other but the nature of that impact varies depending on which story is read first. Half the books published had them in one order, which was reversed in the other half.

12. Depending on circumstances and aims, there is a further choice. It is possible not only to identify emergent properties at an early stage, but also to choose to actively stimulate them: to then privilege the new opportunities thus created over whatever had been proposed in pre-existing plans. This opens possibilities for highly dynamic ways of working, which, of course, will have their own tensions.

1.4 Core Concepts of Contemporary Approaches to Knowledge

1. There is a tendency to take knowledge very seriously, to put it on a pedestal, complete with a capital 'K'. Perhaps, for that knowledge developed through the most profound, creative and painstaking work, that is as it should be. For most of us, most of the time however, the 'knowledge' we use and reproduce is not the 'justified true belief' of classical definition, but 'probably correct and good enough for today'. Whether we are talking here of knowledge or information is a moot point. We live in societies awash with information from which we draw, filter, interpret and adapt what we need to try and make our lives go forward, socially and economically. Globalisation and the internet have combined to expand enormously the possibilities of this process. Infinite and uncontrollable permutations of people, information and knowledge, however ephemeral, however constructed, form the social backdrop against which all more deliberate actions are played out.

2. Knowledge or epistemology, *'the branch of philosophy that deals with the varieties, grounds and validity of knowledge*'[26] and arguments over definitions of knowledge go back a very long way. They are a feature of classical debate, of medieval Christian and Islamic theology, of the Enlightenment and, over the last fifty years or so, of increasing challenges to classical orthodoxy[27]. Many of

[26] Note: definition from Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 6th Edition, OUP, Oxford

[27] Insert: The next edition will contain more reference to asome of the key texts about the nature of knowledge and attempts to study it. A lot of very interesting work has been done in the last fifty years or so both in relation to concepts of science and scientific and academic method and to the dialogue between academic knowledge and other actors in society who might use it – something of particular importance in the development domain. Our interest in doing so, however, will not be to attempt an intellectual critique of this work but to think how it, and the various questions it poses, can be put at the service of a more vigorous, open debate about the issues we raise in this section.

these have been little read outside their fairly specialised areas of origin. We suggest that as concepts of knowledge become ever more closely tied to concepts of economy and society – that is to the management of our daily lives – it is time such debates received more public attention.

3. One of the features of certain types of knowledge is their capacity for precision. Often, being absolutely clear about what a piece of knowledge consists of and what it means is a precondition of it having any value, of it being knowledge. It is therefore strange that there is little precision in the use of the word 'knowledge' itself. The Oxford English Dictionary provides fourteen definitions of the word as a noun, three more as a verb and eight more when the word is used in conjunction with another. French, even with its usage officially overseen by the Academie Francaise, provides us with a choice of 'savoir-faire', 'savoir' and 'connaissance' and allows us the latter two in the plural, something about which the OED appears agnostic but which certainly annoys the Microsoft spellchecker. We could then take the argument that thought is always constructed within the structure of a language[28] and argue that the links between thought and knowledge are so strong, that this must, in all case where knowledge is described in words, apply to knowledge too: that there must be a linguistic base to knowledge. Knowledge clearly forms part of and is situated within philosophical systems. The

[28] Insert: Is knowledge expressed in English identical to the same knowledge expressed in Chinese? Probably not as it was presumably to avoid such ambiguity that Europeans, whatever their mother language, for many centuries used Latin as a universal language for intellectual labour. To this day, many disciplines employ their own distinct vocabulary. Others however take the links between language and knowledge much further. The idea that issues of social context and ideology influence people's individual choices of words even in which to think, never mind use, is proposed by V.N.Volosinov, in ' Marxism and the Theory of Language' published in Russian in 1929 and in English by Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA 1986. The argument is echoed and developed in later work by Mikhail Bakhtin, believed to have been his colleague and friend.

disputes of the Ancient Greeks[29] about its nature continue to this day. The influence of Zen Buddhist thought on Japanese business practice were highlighted in the first global best seller[30] on knowledge management and business. It is equally possible to talk of Indian and African approaches to knowledge, based on their specific philosophical or belief systems. If we recognise that our knowledge is built at least in part within the frameworks of language, philosophy and religious outlook, then will not our gender and our cultural identities also influence it? If this does not tax us enough, could we not also consider divine revelation or the question, entirely relevant to any discussion of local knowledge in many parts of the world, of whether the ideas and guidance communicated through the specialised media of shamanic ritual, soothsaying or rites of passage constitute or are based upon what can be called knowledge?

4. Knowledge can be explicit and codified. It can be quite ephemeral. What is described as tacit knowledge or intuition, but which may in fact be the recall of only semi-consciously noted thought or evidence, has been reported in every area of knowledge generation. This has not always been recognised. Much of the earlier writing on knowledge management concentrated on codified knowledge. More recent authors have tended to emphasise both the importance of and the different characteristics of tacit knowledge. We think that both types of knowledge are used all the time in virtually all conceivable knowledge based processes.

5. Faced with this wide variety of understandings of the word ‘knowledge’, we have a choice. It is possible to be dogmatic, a word itself rooted in epistemology, and assert that one particular

[29] Inset: Reference to Julian Jenkins and Aristotle
[30] Note: Nonaka, I. and Takeuchi, H. 1995, 'The Knowledge-Creating Company: How Japanese Companies Create the Dynamics of Innovation, OUP, Oxford

understanding of knowledge is right and that everyone else is therefore wrong. In a multi-polar world, this approach is unlikely to be very productive. It is probably more useful to recognise that whilst knowledge itself can be very precise, its use as a word is more open, thus representing the diversity of meanings which the concept holds in different areas of life, in different languages and cultures.

6. In Part 3 of this book we explore further aspects of the changes we believe are currently taking place in definitions of knowledge (epistemology) and the circumstances of its production and use (political economy). We relate these changes to a combination of continuously evolving scientific and technical possibilities, changing socio-economic contexts, and the dynamic relationships between them. These are all contested areas which throw up a range of possibilities, some of which may appear inevitable, others to have appeared by happenstance but nearly all of which, once they are untangled and set in context, offer choices with political and economic implications. At this stage, however, we simply wish to identify a number of trends in how knowledge is produced and used that relate to the new practice that we shall elaborate over the coming chapters. We believe that these are important and, in the main, growing trends. This is not to say that they are the only trends in changing understandings of 'knowledge'. At the same time as these trends grow, they compete with other different or opposing trends too. 'Knowledge societies', like any other, are a terrain of conflicting interests.

Changing definitions of knowledge

7. 'An Outline of Modern Knowledge' was published in 1931

'Because in our view there has been steadily growing, during the last twelve years, a desire to know which has had no parallel since the Renaissance, and which is now felt by relatively a far larger class of

men and women than it was then'[31]*.* It consisted of twenty four articles, each solicited from an expert in the field, covering what the editors no doubt considered to be the most important subjects to know about. The model is of an object being produced by experts for consumption by others. Whilst all systems of knowledge are contingent on subsequent re-interpretation of theory and evidence, the 'knowledge' in question is, whilst it still retains the status of knowledge, static and complete.

8. There has been a gradual shift away from this understanding of knowledge as a collection of incontrovertible and permanent facts - 'knowledge as object' - to seeing it as a dynamic and interactive process, tacit as well as explicit. Such a process, which may be based on practical experience, observation and discussion as well as on formal research, offers a different 'knowledge' of reality. More fundamentally there are doubts as to just how free of human interpretation 'scientific' or 'objective' knowledge can ever be. The chemist and philosopher Michael Polyani put forward a number of arguments as to why what is described as objective knowledge is better thought of as 'Personal Knowledge'[32]. To us, the one which makes the most immediate sense is his contention that we need knowledge to understand knowledge and that involves an informed, skilled and deliberate act of comprehension. The knower, therefore, has to be willing and able to participate in the act of knowing. This process includes the capacity of the 'knower' to interpret what they are seeing or hearing, an action which always implies a degree of subjectivity and which becomes more subjective the more complex - and thus the more subject to different interpretation – is the issue under consideration or the context in which it is being applied. We

[31] Note: Victor Gollancz, quote from 1931 publisher's list, referenced on Wikipedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/An_Outline_of_Modern_Knowledge accessed 24/04/2013
[32] Note: Reference to Polyani

call this ‘knowledge as understanding’ which we define as ‘the informed and supposedly rational basis for a person’s understanding of a phenomenon or a situation’. We say ‘supposedly rational’ to recognise the possibility of error. More importantly the definition is tied to people in their personal or institutional spaces. As such, it generates understandings to which people, businesses and institutions, as the semi-autonomous adaptive agents which inhabit complexity theory, will inevitably react. In doing so, whatever it is that is being studied changes. Knowledge as understanding, above all when it is 'in use', is always dynamic.

The social and organisational settings of knowledge creation and use

9. Knowledge has long been associated with elite power, with educated minorities or with dominant religions. Now, it is something that everyone tries to access, respond to and use as they navigate their working and personal lives, hence the term ‘knowledge society’. This partly reflects the large expansion of education in many countries – so that many more people are better versed in formal knowledges – but also the changing definitions of knowledge. If ‘knowledge’ includes what has been learnt from personal experience and what is intuitively ‘known’ as well as what has been formally received, then the number of knowledge actors and the range of what they do with it also increases.

10. The pervasiveness of knowledge in our lives combines with the challenges of complexity and wicked problems to demand a far greater variety of approaches to how it is created and recognised. For some centuries the growth of human knowledge has largely been driven by ever more sophisticated research, typically conceptualised within disciplinary or other forms of specialised pathway and located in formal structures of academic, commercial or government

research. This will undoubtedly remain an important approach to further discovery. However, other approaches, which seek to draw together knowledge from a variety of sources across disciplines or other boundaries are possible. These approaches, given the complex nature of the most pressing questions the earth faces and given the new technological capacity, as ICTs enable almost infinite permutations for accessing and assembling information, may become the most productive approaches to generating new knowledge of value. If this is to happen, the very different organisational, funding and management approaches which these newer approaches require need to be understood and supported. People also need to be able to learn how to work in such ways.

11. Historically, knowledge produced by formal study, especially in the 'hard' sciences'[33], has had a number of distinguishing characteristics. It is created within academically defined disciplines which, by definition, require a certain discipline of process and method, which is explicit and is as available to critique as the results and the analysis that it produces. Part of the process involves peer review by others who can ensure that the work has been properly done within the methodologies accepted by the discipline. Where the work is based on experiment or on observation of generally predictable phenomena, it should be replicable. The resultant knowledge is often seen as 'objective' - in that it can be demonstrated independently of the person who originally thought of the experiment[34]. It also becomes a form of object, which can then

[33] Insert: brief note on meaning of word science, making the point that forms of intellectual endeavour that are not usually regarded as science, like history, still demand explicit attention to methodology and rigour - also EU scientist remark in Brighton

[34] Inset: 1. But science as riddled with ambition, competition and prejudice as anything else, Polyani examples of 'anomalous data'. Also examples of tacit knowledge in innovation 2. Polyani on the need for personal knowledge to understand science 3. Byrne lack of empirical basis of some positivist methodology

in some way be 'transferred' or sold to other parties. Such knowledge is closely associated with positivism, *'a philosophical system recognizing only that which can be scientifically verified or which is capable of logical or mathematical proof'*[35]. One of the components of 'scientifically' as used in that definition is that of the detachment of the observer from what is being observed, the 'dualism' of post enlightenment science.

12. All well and good, and it would require an extreme form of bias to refuse to recognise what has been achieved over the last three hundred years using and developing such approaches. However, it is also the case that these positivist approaches are not well suited to open questions which require an inter-disciplinary or other forms of cross-boundary co-operation, cannot possess solutions based on scientific proof or the certainty of being replicable and which may not only imply but demand the active engagement of the researchers in the processes which they are researching. In these more open processes, evidence does not offer '*logical or mathematical proof*'. It contributes – for and against - to reasoned argument.

13. Egged on by competition for resources and institutional power within research institutes, research policy debates and extending into areas of applied knowledge, such as 'development', these various approaches to knowledge generation have been hotly contested for some time. In our view, this is neither necessary nor productive. A variety of approaches to knowledge production are each valid in their own circumstances. What is required is a better and more shared understanding of which approaches are most likely to be productive for which purposes and a readiness to reshape

[35] Note: OED

research institutions either to specialise in one approach or another or to allow a variety of approaches to flourish. This is not as easy as it sounds – potential difficulties include philosophy, self-image, exclusiveness or openness, training and career path options as well as resources -but it should not be impossible. The issues of what counts as research and how it should be organised are all the more pressing in environments, like developing countries, in which resources are scarce.

New business models

14. The economics of the industrial age were based on the difference between a market (and competition) set price for a particular object and the costs of the limited and known variables involved in its production. The transition to a service economy has made this picture more complex but essentially there remains a pre-designed product with an achievable price point and a set of costs associated with its delivery which need to be managed if the service business is to succeed. A knowledge business is fundamentally different. It is often not clear, at the start of a project, which output of the process will actually be the product you sell, nor how much it will cost to develop or what it will sell for[36]. There is no longer an obvious link between cost of production and price, nor is there any standardised norm for the role and value of labour in the process. Indeed many knowledge projects benefit from voluntary and often unpaid input from communities of people interested in the project, its products or the processes used to develop it. Also, once the 'knowledge development' costs of a product are covered, the costs of reproduction may be close to zero.

15. Knowledge based businesses tend to adopt one of two

[36] Insert: Nesta reference and findings

business models, which offer very different approaches to their inherent risks: the IP model and the Open Knowledge model. The former concerns the codifying of knowledge produced as *'intellectual property*' , from which some form of rent can then be derived which will cover the costs of creating the knowledge in the first place. The latter aims to greatly reduce the cost of production through sharing knowledge through peer to peer, creative commons or open source mechanisms. In that the length of copyright is legally defined and can be varied, the two are not entirely mutually exclusive, although they are in both commercial and political competition. Each lobbies governments and regulatory systems to shift the legal norms in their direction, in a largely hidden but absolutely key political battle as to the social structure of the 'knowledge society'. The former, with its higher cost base, tends to be the choice of large existing corporations seeking to defend their current prominence. The latter with its lower costs of entry and its open character has the potential for greater social inclusiveness, as well as being better suited to exploratory processes in which the nature of the outputs and their potential value is not known at the outset. Data and information generated by the actions of public bodies, publicly funded research, civil society and the public at large add a third important element to the mix, albeit one which, if it does not assert its origins, can operate as a hidden subsidy to copyright owners.

16. In this book, thinking about how knowledge generated largely through public funding can be put to use improving the lives of the poorest inhabitants of the planet, we are largely interested in how the Open Knowledge model can be most effectively applied. Indeed, when thinking of overall socio-economic trends rather than the interests of particular individuals or businesses, we are not aware of any plausible development strategy based on the alternative. In part three, where we consider the broader implications of new ways of

working, we question whether it offers the possibility of new modes of production in which the ownership of capital has a less dominant influence on what actually happens.

Multiple knowledges/ traducture

17. Once we accept that for many of the issues we face, there is often no single 'right answer' or, in this increasingly globalised world, that there should be no dominant culture, insisting on a single understanding of knowledge for everyone, we enter a realm of 'multiple knowledges'. This does not, in our opinion, mean that 'anything goes'[37], that anyone can call anything 'knowledge'. It can instead be a word which, at least in open discussion of public policy, invites a discussion of why something is regarded as knowledge, on what basis and with what meaning to those who hold it to be so. We believe such discussions, if well conducted, themselves create new knowledge of value.

18. If our object is to promote human development, there is no value in processes of knowledge competition, where the aim is for 'our knowledge' to be seen as superior to 'theirs'. The aim is to find the best mix of knowledges to apply to the situation at hand. Part of this relates to the instrumental value of knowledge - 'what knowledge do we need to fix this problem?' - but part also relates to the dynamics of which knowledges are valued and how they are applied. Is it possible, in the context of multiple knowledges and multiple knowledge holders, to forge a shared understanding of a problem and of its solutions in a way which makes sense to everyone involved? If the answer is to be yes, we will have to vastly improve our capacity to understand and engage with knowledges with which we are not familiar, especially those rooted in histories of

[37] Note: reference to Feyerabend, Against Method

powerlessness and injustice. This means engaging with processes of translation which go beyond the language itself, processes which our colleague Dr Wangui wa Goro, herself a professional translator, terms 'traducture'.

Knowing and Being

19. **T**he process of broadening our thinking about knowledge from the realms of formal knowledge to knowledge societies needs to be extended to think about the role of knowledge in the lives of the individuals and social groups who constitute any society. We assert that a capacity for 'knowing' is fundamental to the 'being' of human beings[38]. Without a sense of knowing, are we conscious of being? Without 'knowing', can we act? This argument, it has to be said, is made more difficult by our almost universal capacity to act 'knowingly' and confidently on the basis of completely erroneous beliefs. We would argue, however, that without confidence in one's own knowledge, it is extremely hard to take purposeful action at either a personal or social level. What makes such action effective or of value in a wider context depends on how well aligned our (often confused) internal knowledge processes are with those (often contested) knowledges of those around us and of the external world more generally.

20. This is of particular relevance in the context of international development given the historical experience for most of the 'developing world' of foreign domination. This domination had strong military and economic components but was underpinned by the imposition by the colonisers of their knowledge and culture. This

[38] Note: We also recognise that in the vast majority of circumstances we all conceptualise our knowledge – even to ourselves - in language. Thus it could be said, as argued by T.P.Waldron in 'Principles of Language and Mind', that language comes before knowledge as the core precondition for our human identity.

took place everywhere from the formal denial of British colonizers in Africa that there was any pre-existing knowledge or culture to talk about, to the Portuguese definition of the requirements for social and cultural 'assimilation' necessary to have any legal status as an individual in their colonies (a status 'achieved' by less than 1% of the population). The extent to which such processes went beyond often crude racism and machinery of control to issues of knowledge and identity is illustrated in a minute written by the Chair of the Board of Public Instruction Education, T.B. Macaulay in Bengal in 1835[39]. In it he argues that

'*It is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern, --a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population' (clause 34)*

His vision is clearly that of transmitting European knowledge to Indians and of doing so in English because

'the dialects commonly spoken among the natives of this part of India contain neither literary nor scientific information, and are moreover so poor and rude that, until they are enriched from some other quarter, it will not be easy to translate any valuable work into them' (clause 8)

He is, of course, incapable of recognising that anything of value could come the other way. Indeed he argues that the Board should stop

'wasting the public money, for printing books which are of less value than the paper on which they are printed was while it was blank-- for giving artificial encouragement to absurd history, absurd metaphysics, absurd physics, absurd theology ' (clause 36)

[39] Note: Minute by the Hon'ble T. B. Macaulay, 2nd February 1835, http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/00generallinks/macaulay/txt_minute_education_1835.html accessed 23/01/2015

21. One feature of this letter is the astonishing ignorance it displays[40]. In his comments on it, Nobel prize- winning, Indian economist Amartya Sen traces the influence on the author of James Mills' 'History of British India', published in 1817. Sen notes that Mills declared with some pride in his preface that he had never visited India or learned any of its languages[41]. Another feature, interesting in the light of contemporary debates about the value of different types of education, is that part of Macaulay's argument is based upon the low demand for 'traditional knowledge' compared to European knowledge amongst Indian students. He does so without any apparent consciousness of the role of British power in determining which knowledge offered the possibility of economic advancement. The effect of this power distorted education in India for over a hundred years, both explicitly in terms of policy and, more insidiously as Sen argues, in the choices made by Indian intellectuals in a context of the neglect of Indian scientific heritage and an exaggerated emphasis on Indian spirituality.

22. The issue is not people's capacity to learn and function within in other knowledge systems. As we discuss later (2.1.?), this can be challenging but it happens all the time. The problem comes when this does not happen as a choice but as an imposition, and still worse as an imposition which involves the violent suppression of local knowledges and the environment (linguistic, institutional and geographic) in which they exist. In our view, it is exactly this destruction of deep-rooted ways of knowing which is responsible for the reported histories of widespread psychiatric illness and alcohol abuse in many first nation communities in Australia and North

[40] Insert: Comment on how such attitudes remain. Quote from H.Gilberts article in DIP about Laotian perceptions of outsiders' attitudes to their knowledge.
[41] Note: see Amartya Sen, 2005, 'The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian Culture, History and Identity'. Penguin Books, pp77-80

America[42]. Nor has life necessarily been kinder to those who have tried to adapt to the wishes and prejudices of the colonizers. Frantz Fanon, in his capacity as a psychiatrist, described the psychological trauma of having to deny one's own culture in order to progress in an alien environment in 'Black Skin White Masks' in 1952. Nine years later, having witnessed the first years of the Algerian war of independence at first hand, he developed his medical analysis into political theory in the 'Wretched of the Earth'. This analysis of the frequently negative impact of alienated, foreign educated elites on the politics of nationalism and on the internal social dynamics of newly independent countries remains relevant to this day.

23. One alternative to the imposition by one culture of its knowledge on another is to aim for the complete reverse. This, arguably, is the position taken by Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria. Meaning 'Western education is forbidden', it, and similar fundamentalist movements, seek to both actively resist foreign knowledge and to impose their own on the communities in which they hold sway. This, to us, represents an extreme, disastrous but not at all surprising continuation of the long history of efforts to impose knowledge by force.

24. Knowing as being, whether at an individual or social level, has to reflect choices freely made by people grounded in their own culture but open to such knowledge of others that makes sense to them, that offers some value. This was the explicit understanding of

[42] Note: Russia, after the collapse of the Soviet system might offer another example. Between 1989 and 1995 life expectancy in Russia fell from over 64 years to below 58, with the fall even more marked amongst men. Arguments raged over this was due to the economic policies of the government or very widespread alcohol abuse. We would argue that both potential causes connect to people losing their personal bearings in a context in which nearly everything they had known no longer had meaning. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Demographics_of_Russia#Life_expectancy (accessed 23/01/2015) for more references

Amilcar Cabral, leader of the war of independence in Guinea Bissau[43]. He argued that '*if imperialist domination has the vital need to practice cultural oppression, national liberation is necessarily an act of culture*' and therefore that the whole purpose of liberation was for people '*to return to the upward paths of their own culture*' (p143). However, he was equally clear that this required not simply a critical perspective on traditional culture but the development of a '*scientific culture compatible with the demands of progress*' and '*on the basis of a critical assimilation of mankind's conquests in the domains of art, science, literature, etc., of a universal culture, aiming at perfect integration in the contemporary world and its prospects for evolution'* (p 153).

25. How does this happen? How to blend multiple knowledges in the life of an individual or of a society? How to do so in such a way which stimulates human development in its fullest sense, rather than inhibits it? These are the fundamental questions of our time and, of course, have no simple answer. There need, at every level and in every culture, to be processes of dialogue and negotiation. At their root, however, we believe there is a key democratic value. 'Knowledge as understanding' and 'knowledge in a knowledge society' demand, even more than 'knowledge as object', freedom for the knowers to determine what is of value to them. Without such freedom, the process of 'knowing' cannot extend to the processes of adapting and adopting which are essential to the application of knowledge. We would therefore see the freedom to critically assess knowledges we may wish to use as a fundamental human right, without which, in the way we understand the terms, it makes little sense to talk of knowledge and development[44].

[43] Amilcar Cabral, 1970, 'National Liberation and Culture', Eduardo Mondlane Memorial Lecture, Syracuse University, New York, published in 'Unity and Struggle', Heinemann, 1980

[44] Insert: Our argument here echoes that of Sebastiao Ferreira and Marcus

Knowledge as an Ecology

26. The Oxford English Dictionary offers the following definition of an ecology:

> *Ecology: the branch of biology that deals with organisms' relations to one another and to the physical environment in*

Neto in 'Knowledge Management and Social Learning: exploring the cognitive dimension of development', KM4Dev Journal 1:3 2005

'One way to explore the cognitive dimension of development is thinking of development as a social learning process that contributes to people taking explicit control of their own development experiences, using those experiences autonomously to solve their problems and develop their own future. The freedom of people to assume their development as learning should be understood as a constituent part of development, as a right and, at the same time, as an instrument for promoting development. Development as learning should be understood as a process in which people have the opportunity to reflect on their practice and to draw lessons from their achievements and failures, and as a way of taking control of their experience and life. Development as learning should be understood as an opportunity of mobilising of people's intelligence as a valuable resource (for overcoming scarcity and for achieving development in a sustainable way); and also as a way to mobilize local knowledge resources for reducing external dependence and improving sustainability. p5

However, limitations of local actors and the rules that currently govern development aid reinforce the disequilibrium of power between the donors and receivers. It is very difficult to be critical to 'solutions' that come with financial resources attached to them (whether donated or lent), especially in a condition of poverty and scarcity of resources. The result is a culture of intellectual dependence of most local actors. That dependence makes local actors orient and reduce their intelligence to understanding and applying the solutions generated in developed countries, not to combining global knowledge and local experience in a way that preserves their intellectual autonomy and reinforces their own responsibility. p8

Dependence also shrinks the capacity of people to be adaptive and assertive in applying others' solutions, and also limits their capacity to learn from experience, particularly when they do not feel directly responsible for the solutions. And finally, this intellectual dependence does not recognise the creativity of poor people who are able to survive in difficult and vulnerable conditions. Intellectual dependence is related to the ineffectiveness and poor results of a significant part of the current development aid, for the persistence of poverty and acute social problems in most parts of the world, and the annual waste of billions of dollars. p 8

> *which they live; (the study of) such relations as they pertain to a particular habitat or a particular species.*

It also recognises the existence of the term 'human ecology' as an equivalent meaning where 'human' replaces 'organism'. For some time now, we have been using the term 'knowledge ecology' in the same sense[45]. We think this metaphor is useful on two levels.

27. First, it creates an imaginary environment in which all the different conceptions of and types of knowledge can be seen together and their interdependencies, their differences and their power relationships mapped and better understood. Such an ecology does not have to be a peaceful place. Just as a natural ecology can have sharks and tigers doing their worst, so a knowledge ecology can demonstrate cut throat competition, the protection and theft of intellectual property, attempts to censor opposing views or to starve them of attention.

28. However, the metaphor also allows us to think about the role of an 'ecologist', one who seeks to protect an ecology, in the general context of knowledge ecology and, especially, in that 'particular habitat' which we might call the development knowledge ecology. This should not be a wild ecology, red in claw and tooth. It is, first and foremost, constituted by the knowledge and perspectives of those billions whom 'development' exists to support. If there is not space and respect for their knowledge within the development knowledge ecology, then all other knowledge present, however much it is intended to support and empower its poorest and most marginalised users, will wither on the vine. As for this other knowledge, it is very largely constructed using public funds intended mainly for development support or, if not, for advance of academic

[45] Note: Reference to KM4Dev note.

or scientific knowledge relevant to development support. We regard this as a global public good and think that those who fund, contribute to and use it should treat it as such. There should, in what is contributed to the habitat and how, be a duty of care. In particular this duty should involve the recognition that the ultimate purpose of the knowledges within the ecology is to support development for and by people. As we will discuss in 1.5, current practice is very far from assuming such an ecological approach. One overarching aim - and minimum requirement - of the various different approaches to work with knowledge which we will discuss is that they should all be aware of and take responsibility for their place in a development knowledge ecology. There is a need to care for the whole, whilst contributing to the particular. This to us is a vital aspect of working in a developmental way.

Knowledgescapes and Informational Spaces

29. We think everyone working to support 'development' should have a general awareness of the overall knowledge ecology within which they work. However, for the individual or the small group it may be more useful to focus on the 'informational spaces' or, in the language of our sister publication, the 'knowledgescapes' in which they live and work. These are 'our' parts of the wider knowledge ecology, the parts in which people engage with others to exchange information, to make common sense out of events and ideas and, through such processes, to develop new knowledge which has meaning to ourselves and perhaps also to the group as a whole. Most people live in a range of overlapping informational spaces, some geared to family matters and social obligations, others related to work and income, some perhaps related to politics and governance and to faith. Alternatively, they may relate to particular concerns or activities, like judging the best permutation of public

transport to travel in a big city at any given moment or to seek out and share information about a particular problem, like many self-help groups.

30. The characteristics of each space will vary significantly depending on who occupies it; its thematic or social purpose; the physical distance between the participants; and the means they use to communicate with each other[46]. All functioning spaces, however, are based on a shared understanding of an appropriate level of trust, safety and belonging. They will have tacit or explicit rules to govern their purpose, determine who is entitled to occupy the space and the types of relationships and communications acceptable within the group. Whatever the rules or conventions, if these and the related trust break down, the space will cease to be effective. The details of these rules will depend on the purpose of the space and the culture of the people who occupy it. For instance, a space designed to be of value to victims of domestic violence as they attempt to rebuild their lives will probably have much stricter rules but allow much greater intimacy of communication than one set up by market traders to exchange commercial information.

[46] Insert: In 1.6.9, when talking about development support work as a 'profession', we make reference to Bourdieu's work on the 'Fields of Cultural Production'. It might be hard to fully distinguish some of the more open, public knowledgescapes from the 'fields' he discusses, but, in general, we think we are describing something different – more personal, more autonomous and voluntary, and perhaps
more focused on knowing rather than acting. That is not to say that 'knowledgescapes' are free from manifestations of power – both in terms of having resources to fully access and use them and in many subtle, and some not so subtle, gradations of the 'authority' accorded to the various actors and their knowledges. Nonetheless, we would see power dynamics as being less central to the role and experience of 'knowledgescapes' than they are to those of 'fields'. Another term to describe such public spaces is the 'Agora'. Although sometimes given 'market' connotations, Bauman suggests that this was originally a public space between that of the citizen and that of the space in which new ideas and collective solutions for problems experienced by people could be developed. (explained in Bryant, A. 'Wiki and the Agora, 'It's organising Jim, but not as we know it'', Development in Practice, 16:6, November 2006.

31. *'Ki raflé du ki amul yeeré wayé moy ki amul nit'* as a Senegalese proverb has it*, 'the poor person is not the one without clothes but the one without anyone'*[47]*.* The more such spaces in which an individual is able to participate and the better they function, the wealthier that person is in terms of information and the better able he or she is to participate fully in society. They can also function as both an enabler and stimulator of collaborative effort, knowledge sharing and generation. They are thus not simply important components of a wider knowledge ecology but, if carefully nurtured, also central to its continuing evolution.

Slow knowledge

32. This is perhaps more of a counter-current than a trend, but, in a context where so much needs to be thought through carefully, it needs to become an important part of the mix. It is hard to remember that, as media for mass communication, the internet and mobile telephony are not yet twenty five years old. Yet, in many parts of the world, the idea of being constantly connected, constantly available, constantly ready to respond to anything that a boss, 24 hour news, tweets or blogs throw at you has become normal. The result, as seen by one distinguished sociologist, is that:

> *'Social realities of our time stand in stark opposition to the sanguine and cheerful portrait painted by the communication fetishists. The powerful flow of information is not a confluence of the river of democracy, but an insatiable intake intercepting its contents and channelling them away into magnificently huge, yet stale and stagnant artificial lakes: the more powerful the flow, the greater the threat of the river-bed drying up'*:[48]

or, as Ivan Illich put it:

> *'Accelerating change has become both addictive and*

[47] Note: From Guèye, Ch. (2002). 'Comment répondre à la pauvreté politique ?' *Enda Prospectives/Dialogues Politiques*. Downloaded from http://www.osiris.sn/article150.html

[48] Note: Bauman, Z. in his preface for Bryant, A. 2006, 'Thinking "Informatically"', The Edwin Mellon Press, Lewiston, Queenston, Lampeter.

> *intolerable. At this point the balance among stability, change and tradition has been upset; society has lost both its roots in shared memory and its bearing for innovation...'*[49]

33. 'Its bearing for innovation' seems, to us, to be crucial to any concept of human agency. Do all these changes just happen to us or can we choose which direction in which we want to move. In reality, the answer is probably a mix of both, but our chances of purposeful change are much improved by us taking the time to reflect as, individuals and in groups, on meaning and potential. Our brains may be capable of an instant response to ideas but what emerges several days or weeks later may be of more value. It was in recognition of this and in appreciation of the ideas of the Slow Food Movement, that IKM Emergent, in 2008, adopted the sub-title of 'the campaign for slow knowledge'[50]. According to the Manifesto of the Slow Food Movement:

> *'A firm defence of quiet material pleasure is the only way to oppose the universal folly of Fast Life. May suitable doses of guaranteed sensual pleasure and slow, long-lasting enjoyment preserve us from the contagion of the multitude who mistake frenzy for efficiency.'*[51]

What's not to like?

[49] Note: Illich,Ivan 1973, ' Tools for Conviviality' p 88, Harper & Row
[50] Note: At the time, we thought we had coined the expression but internet searches rapidly revealed a number of users of the term, not least Orr, David, 2004, 'The Nature of Design', Oxford University Press
[51] Note: Folco Portinari, The Slow Food Manifesto, December 1989 http://www.slowfood.com/about_us/eng/manifesto.lasso, accessed 18/04/2013

1.5 New Technologies: Miracles or Mirage

1. Our love of slow knowledge forms a counterpoint to the speed and extent with which new technologies are shaping our lives. The potential – positive and negative - of specific new technologies, especially ICT, will be described on a case by case basis over the next few chapters. Here, we think more generally about what can be expected of technology and what should not.

2. As international networkers, our professional lives have been revolutionised by ICT to a point which would still have seemed miraculous even after our first experiences of e-mail and IP connections. Bill Gates, the founder of the Microsoft software empire, perhaps not surprisingly given his own life, believes new technology in health, agriculture and carbon neutral energy production will be central to significantly resolving some of the biggest challenges of development over the next fifteen years[52]. Interestingly though, he combines his paean to technology with a recognition of the challenges of 'delivering' it to people – a process we would rather describe as one of adoption and adaptation – and a call for the mass engagement of 'global citizens' to make this happen.

3. The fact is that technologies do nothing by themselves. They have no agency. People do things with technologies and what they can and want to do will depend on a number of social and economic factors. These, anywhere, include issues of who can own the technology and who benefits from its use. In many poorer or more isolated parts of the world, there are also real issues of the context of use. These include the simple, if often slow to resolve, issues of the shortage of skilled people, spare parts and supporting infrastructure,

[52] Note: See Gates Letter 2015 http://www.gatesnotes.com/2015-annual-letter?page=0&lang=en&WT.mc_id=01_21_2015_AL2015-GF_GFO_domain_Top_21 accessed 24/03/2015

such as reliable energy supplies, to maintain technologies in efficient operation[53]. In other circumstances long supply chains can be disrupted by currency fluctuations/ restrictions or by political insecurity. These are not just matters of convenience. They materially affect the potential benefits of investing in new technology. They can create unsustainable and, for the people whose livelihoods depend on them, dangerous dependence on supply chains outside of any local control. In the process they can undermine the resilience of local societies by undermining, or sometimes outlawing, traditional alternatives[54].

4. A second issue concerns which technologies are developed and how. Despite the logic of economists who draw attention to the cumulative purchasing power of the 'bottom of the pyramid'[55], most technologies are developed for existing markets, above all for those markets with the resources to pay for them. The problems they are intended to solve and the nature of the solutions they propose are naturally tailored to the environments in which these markets operate. As such they are likely, usually implicitly rather than overtly, to have embedded within them the cognitive, cultural and organisational norms of the main target market. If the technology is subsequently marketed elsewhere, there may be little or no adaptation to the norms of those other markets. The technology

[53] Insert: This has been a long standing problem with the maintenance of mechanised agriculture in much of Africa and as xxx showed as long ago as 2000 in his analysis of ICT use by commercial enterprises in Dakar, Senegal can be problematic even in well-functioning capital cities. It is not just a question of the existence of a single supply chain but its resilience. Mike, for example recently moved from a large British city to a small town. The former had a range of companies and university departments, developing, building and maintaining both hardware and software. It also had some hundreds of automotive repair and supply companies. Almost any technical problem could be resolved on the same day. The small town has one ICT support company and three garages with a limited stock. Repairs depend on the availability of people and material and can take several days.

[54] Note: Reference to TZ seed contract

[55] Note: See for example Prahalad C.K. and Hart S.L. 2002 'The Fortune at the Bottom of the Pyramid' Strategy and Business, Issue 26

may still produce some benefit but this is likely to be of a lower order than that enjoyed by those specific users for whom it was designed – a fact of some relevance to the concept of 'development' as a process of 'catching up'. In the process, the introduced technology may also impose substantial and (often) unintended changes in the way people go about their work. The development sector has the financial clout to break this pattern but seldom recognises the strategic value of doing so[56]. When it does, its approach tends towards incentivising Northern companies to develop technical solutions for 'secondary market' problems such as malaria, rather than addressing the more profound and developmental challenges of creating new technology aligned to the norms of the people who are intended to use it[57].

5. A related question is that 'of the road not taken '[58]. Nearly everything we use has been developed through a process in which a

[56] Note: There are some honourable exceptions. Both the Intermediate Technology Development Group (now Practical Action) and the Appropriate Health Technology Research and Action Group (subsequently Healthlink) have sought to work in open and participatory ways to help people find their own technical solutions to problems that they have defined. Both, at various times, have struggled for funds and the latter went out of business soon after a very drawn out but very significant collaboration with DFID – exactly about issues of knowledge and development – had the plug pulled on it at the very last moment. Thus it is not just in the South that we see the impact of the arbitrary abuse of power.

[57] Insert: This problem is so deeply engrained that we have come across so-called experts, earning their living in the ICT4D field, who pursue their binary solutions in blissful unawareness of the possibility that information and its exchange is embedded in social relations and cultural practice. Powell, Davies and Taylor discussed the mismatch between declared intent and actual result in 'ICT For or Against Development? An Introduction to the Ongoing Case of Web 3.0', IKM WP 16, 2012, (http://wiki.ikmemergent.net/files/1204-IKM-Working_Paper_16-WEB3-Mar_2012-2.pdf accessed 31/03/2015).

[58] Insert: This refers to a 1916 poem by Robert Frost (? Include poem) which reflects on a choice of paths on a woodland walk and how, years later, he might come to say that his choice had 'made all the difference'. I was stimulated to include this paragraph by an essay I came across by Sean Cubitt on the choices made in the development of the screens we all have on our computers in which profitable functionality triumphed, in his opinion, over creative potential. (Cubitt, S. 'Current Screens' in Grau, O. (ed) 'Imagery in the 21st Century', MIT Press 2013)

series of people – scientists, designers, production economists, marketing advisers – have made a series of choices. These are intended to ensure that the products they are creating will work, will attract customers and will make money. In the process, assumptions will be made about customer needs and the context of use which may be right for one target market, but less optimal for another. At a more profound level, interesting paths of scientific inquiry may be abandoned if a workable 'solution' is discovered elsewhere. Technology does not simply 'exist' and sit there waiting to 'be applied'. It is purposefully created for particular reasons and particular contexts. It needs to be critically assessed and possibly adapted or recreated before being used for other reasons in other contexts.

6. Technologies and the artefacts through which they work form and are shaped by the cultures of the societies in which they are created and again those in which they are used. Addressing the widespread failures of development policy and interventions in the fields of science and technology, The South Commission, chaired by former Tanzanian president Julius Nyere, argued for more attention to the cultural dimension of its use:

Culture, viewed as the sum total of values, beliefs, attitudes, customs, and patterns of behaviour in a given society, is a vital pillar of social and economic transformation. Capital formation and technical progress are essential elements of development, but the broader environment for their effectiveness is a society's culture; it is only by the affirmation and enrichment of cultural identities through mass participation that development can be given strong roots and made a sustained process. (p46)[59]

[59] Note: Julius Nyere (Chair), The Challenge to the South: Report South Commission, 1990. http://www.southcentre.int/wp-

It is hard to see much evidence of this recommendation being paid any notice since. There has been some progress in other areas. For example, following similar criticism of approaches to the implementation of ICT investments in the North[60], there is now more attention to human computer interaction, the context of use and, as we discuss below, agile design in the field of ICT. Unfortunately, the lesson has, in the main, been applied to the industry's Northern markets, with little evident awareness that contexts and cultures of use in the many parts of the Global South may also require specific attention[61]. For us, recognising and adapting to the cultural contexts

content/uploads/2013/02/The-Challenge-to-the-South_EN.pdf (accessed April 8th 2016).

[60] Note: Sheffield reference for 1990s

[61] Insert: These questions have been studied in far more depth and informed by detailed research by Gwyneth Sutherlin. As far as we know, she is the only person to have researched how well the shape and options of a standard on-screen dialogue box work in other information cultures. As she states on her blog 'my communicative purpose and challenge was to work within an impossible sort of Venn Diagram of three disciplines that never seem to collaborate: Computer science (such as developers, information scientists, and engineers), linguistics (including cognitive linguistics, but really all language-oriented studies), and finally political science (policy-oriented and often practitioners such as human rights activists or crisis response managers). Pairs of these disciplines can be found teaming up, but an effort combining the insights of all three is, sadly, very rare indeed'. (http://theseem.blogspot.co.uk/, 20/10/2014, accessed 31/03/2015). An overview of the context which results from such a failure can be found in her paper 'The **Digital** Battlefield: Controlling the Technology of Revolution', IRIE International Review of Information Ethics Vol. 18, 2012 (***www.i-r-i-e.net****/inhalt/018/018_full.pdf* accessed 31/03/2015).

She has presented two detailed examples of what this means in practice in 'A voice in the crowd: Broader implications for crowdsourcing translation during crisis', Journal of Information Science 39, 2013. To quote from the abstract
'This paper follows four crises in which different crowdsourcing applications were developed by a range of actors. In each instance, the design approach failed to incorporate the unique circumstances of the conflict context, resulting in a translation application that removed authorship, dissolved intentionality, and shed contextual markers from original sources. This flawed application prevented the original contributors from interacting with the information directly related to their own life-threatening situation, and the information it amassed formed an unsound basis for decision-making by international actors.'
More recently she has published 'Groupthink: ICT Design with culture in mind' in the proceedings of CATaC (2014)
https://www.duo.uio.no/bitstream/handle/10852/42038/CATaC+2014+Proceedings.pdf?sequence=1#page=126 (accessed 20-04-2016). Rhgis

in which technologies will be applied is essential. Our general contention is that most technologies can and should be designed to work in ways with which the people using the technology feel at ease. This includes understanding and trying to build upon those technologies which have historically been developed and used within that society. This should be the norm of development support. However, the process is neither static nor a one-way street. Whether it be the plough, the saw or the pen, people do not simply use technologies: they interact with them. A farmer with a new tractor will not see the fields in the same way he or she did before. The technologies we use shape our bodies, our thoughts and imagination[62], our working days and our built environment. How this interaction unfolds in any context needs to be followed. It constitutes one of the emergent properties of a process of change and the process of supporting such change needs to respond and adapt accordingly.

7. Different technologies have their own 'cultures of operation' and such cultures will have an impact on the cultural norms of the societies in which the technologies are applied. In some cases this is non-negotiable. For example, technologies, such as aviation or nuclear where mistakes can have a catastrophic impact, have an absolute requirement for levels of applied discipline which can be challenging to maintain in any social or cultural setting. Often, however, the development of new technology can be a two-way process in which how a technology is introduced is both mediated by the norms of that society and capable of influencing them. For example, some software development, such as that using 'agile'

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describes the (mis)match between the programming of crowd sourcing information apps for use in rural Uganda and the structure of the Acholi language

[62] Note: We give some examples of the subtle ways our thought and knowledge can be influenced by the tools we are using in 2.4.x

methodologies, is so dependent on understanding its potential users that the process of creating it can be highly interactive and participatory. Like development support, it can also be an arena of cross-boundary co-creation, which constantly confronts, and tries to resolve, top-down and bottom-up pressures. As such, the process of developing some new technology, can inspire a wider process of learning and offer new approaches and new insights to other social challenges[63].

8. What technology actually gets produced and how effective agile approaches are in developing the most appropriate tools depends on the quality of the communications and the relationships between the developer and the potential users. This, as will be discussed in 2.3, applies to virtually all cross-boundary or multi-disciplinary work, but it is a particular issue in technology development, especially ICT. One issue is that ICT has its disciplinary roots in Electrical Engineering. Engineers tend to work in very structured ways in which the objective is to provide a workable solution to a defined problem. Many ICT users however, especially in development support, work in very fluid environments in which the 'problem' and their responses to it need to be flexible. Agile approaches are intended to overcome some mismatches but, often faced by pressures of budgets and time, do not always go deeply

[63] Insert: As noted above such interactive and agile approaches are by no means universal and still need to be sensitively negotiated if they are to achieve the desired level of engagement rather than be perceived as an arrogant assertion of 'best' or 'most modern' practice. The possibilities for 'international development' and 'ICT development' learning from each other have been explored by Mark Thompson in 'ICT and Development Studies: Towards Development 2.0' (Judge Business School WP 27/07 https://www.jbs.cam.ac.uk/fileadmin/user_upload/research/workingpapers/wp0727.pdf, accessed 31/03/2015) and by Evangelia Berdou In 'Participatory Technologies And Participatory Methodologies: Ways Forward For Innovative Thinking And Practice', IKM WP 17, 2012 (http://wiki.ikmemergent.net/files/13-IKM_Working_Paper_16_Berdou.pdf, accessed 31/03/2015)

enough into the issues they research or create the long term relationships with users which they need to succeed. Technologists, in particular in ICT, take pride in, and are often rewarded for the speed of their work. They are thus often to be found rushing towards a technological 'solution' whilst the full social complexity of the environment in which the 'solution' needs to work is still being discovered. This can be a particular problem in cross cultural situations where assumptions about information – its accuracy, the trustworthiness of its producers, privacy and readiness for sharing – made in one context can be very misplaced in another[64]. Similarly, users often fail to understand the longer term implications of the technical choices they make and often feel intimidated by their lack of understanding. Finally, there is the difficulty of imagining as yet uninvented futures. It is relatively easy for a farmer to imagine what might be involved in a new technological process which will increase yields. The potential value and possibilities of new ICT can be very hard to foresee either by developers or users. For example, both the World Wide Web and SMS texting have found applications far beyond what their original inventors imagined. Less positively, many other ICT projects have ended in abject failure. In the field of development support, many initiatives, including proposals for the free development of open source software to support humanitarian or developmental causes, come to little or nothing because the basic conversations between developers and users, which could frame such collaboration, have not taken place. All organisations struggle to get the best out of the ICT they use. The development support sector has the particular challenge of applying ICT in a way which helps to cross rather than reinforce the boundaries across which it tries to work. This, we argue later, it has largely failed to do not least because it has yet to fully understand, still less invest in, the

[64] Note: Reference Chile and Ghana examples and the lack of apparent adaptation to their findings

collaborative processes, involving developers and different classes of users that can produce tools properly designed for the information environments in which it operates.

1.6 Understanding Developments

1. So far, we have placed 'development' in inverted commas for the simple reason that we do not believe there is any common, shared understanding of what the term means[65]. Our understanding of 'development' is that it represents positive change in how people live. This can certainly be influenced by 'developments' in many other areas of human endeavour - technology or science for example - but it has to be reflected in human experience within a particular society, as understood by members of that society. Development of some sort has taken place in and is a product of the history of every society on earth, a history which includes the relationships that each society has with other societies. 'Human experience', of course relates to a multitude of circumstances - personal and social, economic and cultural, safety and exploration, present needs and future hopes. All of these are affected by but also contribute to development. Within individual societies, different groups of people will have different priorities and different mechanisms for discussing and agreeing their priorities. It is quite possible to have changes

[65] Insert: The word is often used normatively as if it is simply a good thing. In international discourse, the focus of attention has changed fairly regularly every few years over the last half century. This has involved not simply changes in priority and uncertainty over what will be supported but the advocacy of strongly inconsistent positions on food and agriculture policy, the environment, the role of the state, education etc. .Some, looking in particular at the quantity of development support in the context of overall financial flows, see 'development' as essentially a device of wealthy countries to retain control of social and economic agendas in a post-colonial era. Others, such as Escobar, see 'development' used as a national ideology which is used to promote a capitalist modernism in the interest of local elites, whilst excluding dissenting voices and aiming to depoliticise decisions by claiming they are all made for the good of 'development' In donor countries, where populist politicians lambast the giving away of 'our money' through what are labelled as corrupt and spendthrift policies, the argument gets reduced to whether more or less money should be directed to development. We believe these arguments should all be given serious attention and that the issue throughout is not the use of the word, nor the quantity of money being applied, but what is actually being done, why, with what aim and with whose engagement and consent. This is the reason for our insistence on clarity of intent (1.1.20). Meanwhile, we still need a word to describe social and economic social progress – and why not 'development'?

which are regarded as 'development' by many but as unwelcome change by a few. If the proportion is reversed, it can hardly be said that development has taken place, even though significant change may have. If development is an endogenous process - that is one which takes place within a society , albeit as part of its interaction with the outside world - it follows that what it consists of and what it looks like will vary from place to place. We have to talk of 'developments' not 'development': there is no single destination towards which everyone wants to go. In particular, development can in no sense be concerned with replicating other societies based elsewhere in the world. Whatever convergences in various aspects of different societies may be achievable, attempts to copy one society's experience to another are neither possible nor desirable. As the German philosopher Gadamer said:

> *'The greatest challenge of the coming century, both for politics and social science, is that of understanding the other. The days are long gone when Europeans and other 'westerners' could consider their experience and culture as the norm towards which the whole of humanity was headed, so that the other could be understood as an earlier stage on the same road we had trodden'*[66].

In other words, what constitutes development is determined by the culture of the society in which it is taking place

2. This is not to say that development cannot be externally stimulated or positively influenced by the application of some new technology, but only if the local conditions exist in which it can be adapted and adopted. Thus there is 'development', which represents positive change becoming embedded within a society, and 'development support', which represents the efforts of others to encourage and support that development taking place. In our view this is a very important but frequently ignored distinction. Its

[66] Note: Gadamer xxxxx Quoted in Wallace, T. et al, 'Aid, NGOs and the Realities of Women's Lives: a perfect storm', Practical Action Publishing, 2013, p6

implication is that 'development support', however well-resourced with money, technology or knowledge from experience elsewhere can never be the driver of development. Social and economic change can be and often have been imposed by one society on another on the basis of unequal relationships of economic and political power. This, however, does not constitute 'development', at least as it has ever been explicitly described by any of its advocates since the Second World War[67].

3. It follows that the effectiveness of development support is, before all else, dependent on its capacity to recognise potential for endogenous developmental processes and either support them directly or create a more benign international environment in which they can flourish. This is the simple reality upon which all development support ought to be based. Of course, developmental processes - that is efforts to improve human experience - exist in every society, including the richest. That is one reason why, in its latest attempt to set a global agenda for development, the Sustainable Development Goals, the United Nations has moved on from a model based on developing nations and those who support them to one where the goals apply to and demand attention to social, economic and environmental issues in all countries and the many interdependencies between them.

4. Virtually all development support actors would agree that whoever else might benefit, 'development' should prioritise the needs of the poorest and most marginalised sections of any society[68].

[67] Insert: This is not true of its critics, many of whom see Official Development Assistance as a deliberate tool of continued foreign domination, particularly in its efforts to create and enforce a variety of international norms - in trade, intellectual property rights and telecommunications - which are seen as disadvantageous to countries in the South.

[68] Insert: 'Development' can take place at any level but most development support is targeted at issues related to the physiological and safety levels of

Many, including us, understand poverty, and therefore steps to fight poverty, to include notions of security, social belonging, freedom to act and opportunity as well as adequate health, nutrition and shelter[69]. Development support, whether at national or international level comprises an enormous number of organisations undertaking a massive range of activities from digging pit latrines to satellite surveillance of the moisture content of individual fields. How the impact of such measures can be assessed, either individually or as a cumulative effect, is one of the many highly debated questions that exercises the development support community. Crude measures such as Gross Domestic Product per head can give a good overall indication of economic performance but this may not identify poverty caused by massive disparities in income between groups of the population and does not wide differences in income and does not take other factors into account at all. The United Nations Development Programme uses a Human Development Index, which incorporates information about education and life expectancy, whilst, influenced by such arguments, the UK government a more complex wellbeing index, also known as the happiness index, to measure satisfaction with life in the UK[70]. In a precursor of Gueye's observation that lack of connections to other people is the biggest indicator of poverty (1.x.y), David Brown argued that the free flow of useful (and accurate) information through a community could be

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Maslow's hierarchy of needs https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs (accessed 19/03/2014). However, this is not necessarily true for all development support organisations. Many specialise in supporting work on specific issues, such as the environment or human rights and may not address socio-economic distinctions as they do so. More broadly, of course, the fact that many agree where support should be prioritised does not imply any agreement as to how this is best done.

[69] Note: Explained in depth in A. Sen, 1999, 'Development as Freedom' Oxford University Press, pages

[70] Note: See http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi and https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-wellbeing (both accessed 19/01/2017)

used as an overall indicator of social development within it[71]. We think a similar approach can be taken to knowledge. In our view a society in which citizens have the capacity to create, acquire, debate, adapt and use knowledge across the range of activities that affect their daily lives is very likely to tick most of the boxes for being a developed (or fast developing) country[72]. Knowledge, its exchange and its constructive and dynamic use are themselves indicators of development. Our focus in this book is more about how knowledge is created and used in development support rather than across the board in any particular society. However, whether and how the former enables and supports the latter is clearly a question of fundamental importance.

5. Implicit in the idea of development support is the assumption that deliberate action can have a positive impact, however defined. That means that leaving events entirely to the mercy of prevailing political and economic forces is a less good option than trying to influence them in some way. We will look at some current approaches to and debates within the domain of development support in Part 3. It is a domain of massive resources - over US $ 125 billion a year - and deeply implicated in policy arguments which shape political and economic power at a global level. As we shall see, it is often not easy to discern the connections between this juggernaut and the development - that is positive changes in the lives of people, especially poor people, as and where they live them - it is supposed to support. Indeed, as we arrive at the centenary of the

[71] Note: Brown, D. 1991, 'Methodological consideration in the evaluation of social development programmes: An alternative approach', Community Development Journal, Vol 26, No. 4, pp 259-265

[72] Insert: There have been some initiatives in this direction. As mentioned above, the UNDP Wellbeing Index does measure formal educational attainment and the International Telecommunications Union promotes and ICT Development index which, like a similar E-Readiness exercise, tends to focus more on technical infrastructure and subscribers to digital services. Neither really capture whether and how the social context in community is encouraging or constraining knowledge exchange.

first world war, we might be reminded of the incredible achievements of the military high commands on the Western Front. Young men got brought together from all over the world (including actual and former colonies) to be assembled in one place, housed, fed, armed, supplied with supporting artillery (even with breweries nationalised and licensing laws changed to ensure the munitions workers were sober) in feats of organisation and logistics never before witnessed. For what? To be sent over the top and gunned down by the thousand. Amidst all this effective work, no-one, it seemed, had actually given much productive thought as to how to win a battle. On the contrary, such waste, effectively such failure, became normalised, became what everyone involved expected.

6. There are, as we and others have noted, those for whom development support offers the potential to promote grandiose dreams, some fantasy in which, if the prior existence of people and their society are recognised at all, rather than everything starting from scratch, everyone and everything is supposedly swept along on a tide of well-intentioned change[73]. Except, to continue the analogy with the Somme and Verdun, this does not happen. Even the most *dirigiste* intervention demands some negotiation and discussion with people on the ground who are either needed to implement what is planned or who have the capacity to resist and subvert it either openly or covertly. Any development which is to be 'sustainable' requires the people who it involves to not only have the capacity to implement and to live it but to want to do so. To repeat, development support can only work if it supports what people can and want to do, that is if it is both feasible and socially acceptable in its place of operation[74].

[73] Note: Reference to insert on land policy in first section above
[74] Note: There is of course a separate discussion to be had about the distinction between what is possible and what is popular. 'Acceptable' describes the minimum standard.

7. This has a number of implications as to the absolute priorities on which development support organisations need to focus if they are to be able to identify opportunities for development and develop the capacity to support it. We will consider each of these in detail later but, in summary, the minimum requirements are that:

- **They should know what they are doing**: specifically they should seek to understand the social and economic realities that their development support is supposed to improve and how local people living in these realities perceive them
- **They should be able to communicate with the people whose lives they are intent on affecting:** such communication needs to work in both directions
- **Management should be professional**: the methods used should be appropriate to what they are trying to achieve and the contexts in which they are working, rather than undermine them. Greater professionalism in development support was one of the main recommendations of a key report on Dutch development assistance written produced for WRR, the scientific council of the Netherlands[75]. The report makes clear what such professionalism entails:

  > *'...the emphasis on presenting results, monitoring and self-evaluation can also have negative effects, NGOs become more bureaucratic rather than more professional. After all, professionalization means having enough room to manoeuvre to be able to respond to the changing situation in countries themselves, to experiment, to be part of a learning system, and to render account for the main framework of their interventions, rather than the details.'* (van Lieshout, p 202)

[75] Note: van Lieshout P., Went R. & Kremer R. *'Less Pretension, More Ambition: on development policy in times of globalization'*, WRR/ University of Amsterdam Press English Language edition 2010, www.wrr.nl/fileadmin/en/pub...Less_pretention_more_ambition.pdf accessed 23/07/2013. The report was subsequently formally accepted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands

- **They should aim to work in a 'developmental' way:** this might appear the most nebulous of these priorities but it is equally important. We understand this in three ways.
  - Development support activities should be managed to derive the maximum possible developmental effect in every possible way at every level. Thus the aim should not be to achieve the 'target' in the shortest and cheapest way but do so in ways which develop the skills and capacity of those involved, enable the sharing and re-use of knowledge or tools, such as software, acquired in the process and, when working in poorer environments, use and benefit local businesses wherever possible. In such ways is the maximum developmental return of any investment and genuine value for money realised.
  - A developmental culture involves working with and respect for all the stakeholders in the processes which you are participating. This involves paying attention to the relationships through which all development support – and associated learning - takes place. It includes listening to people and understanding their motivations for engagement in the work. It also means taking responsibility for the impact on other stakeholders if plans change and interests diverge, rather than leaving them in the lurch.
  - Finally, people working in development need to take responsibility for their own behaviour and their own learning and development. We consider the role of individuals in more detail below (1.9).

8. These might seem very obvious priorities for development support organisations, many of which take pride in the moral purpose of their activities. Sadly, as we will see in Part 3, the pressures of management expectations means that these priorities

seldom form part of the norms of current practice. Part of our focus in Part 2 is on what actually needs to be done if they are to be realised. However, we need to go further. Basic and vital as these priorities may be, they only provide a fairly superficial starting point for the changes required if development support is to embrace the potential of emerging practice in the creation and use of knowledge. The bigger problem we suggest are the paradigms - that is the philosophical and organisational norms - in which development support work is conceived and managed[76]. In part this relates to how discourse and relationships are still based on historical dualisms of 'us' the developed and 'the other'; donor and recipient; 'knowledge' and 'ignorance' and assumptions about gender and culture that cast long and disruptive shadows. More fundamental are the philosophical approaches which underpin our understandings of development and of how knowledge can contribute to it, approaches which, as indicated above, are undergoing significant rethinking and change in all societies across the globe. Is development support a thing which can be done and, to be done well, needs to be structured and controlled? Or is development itself an emergent property of all that has gone before, essentially uncontrollable but, capable of being influenced and shaped by the careful interpretation of and response to fluid and changing realities?

9. The Dutch WRR report came to other important conclusions with regard to development and development support. First, that it is complex:

> *'Development proceeds though unexpected combinations of order and chaos, based on sediments of pre-colonial and colonial relations mixed with modern technologies, institutions and ambitions, with all of this taking place in an increasingly interdependent world'* (van Lieshout p 86).

[76] Note: One definition of a paradigm, provided by Robert Chambers is ' *A mutually reinforcing pattern of concepts, values and principles, methods and procedures, roles and behaviours, relationships and mindsets'.*

It is also sceptical of grandiose plans and simple answers in general and recognises the importance of diversity and context. The institutional forms capable of enabling effective development processes will *'vary widely and must be grafted onto the existing social and institutional roots'* (p 86). Finally, it is clear about the overall goal: *'the ultimate task of high-quality development policy remains to search for mechanisms to initiate self-reinforcing processes of endogenous change'* (p232).

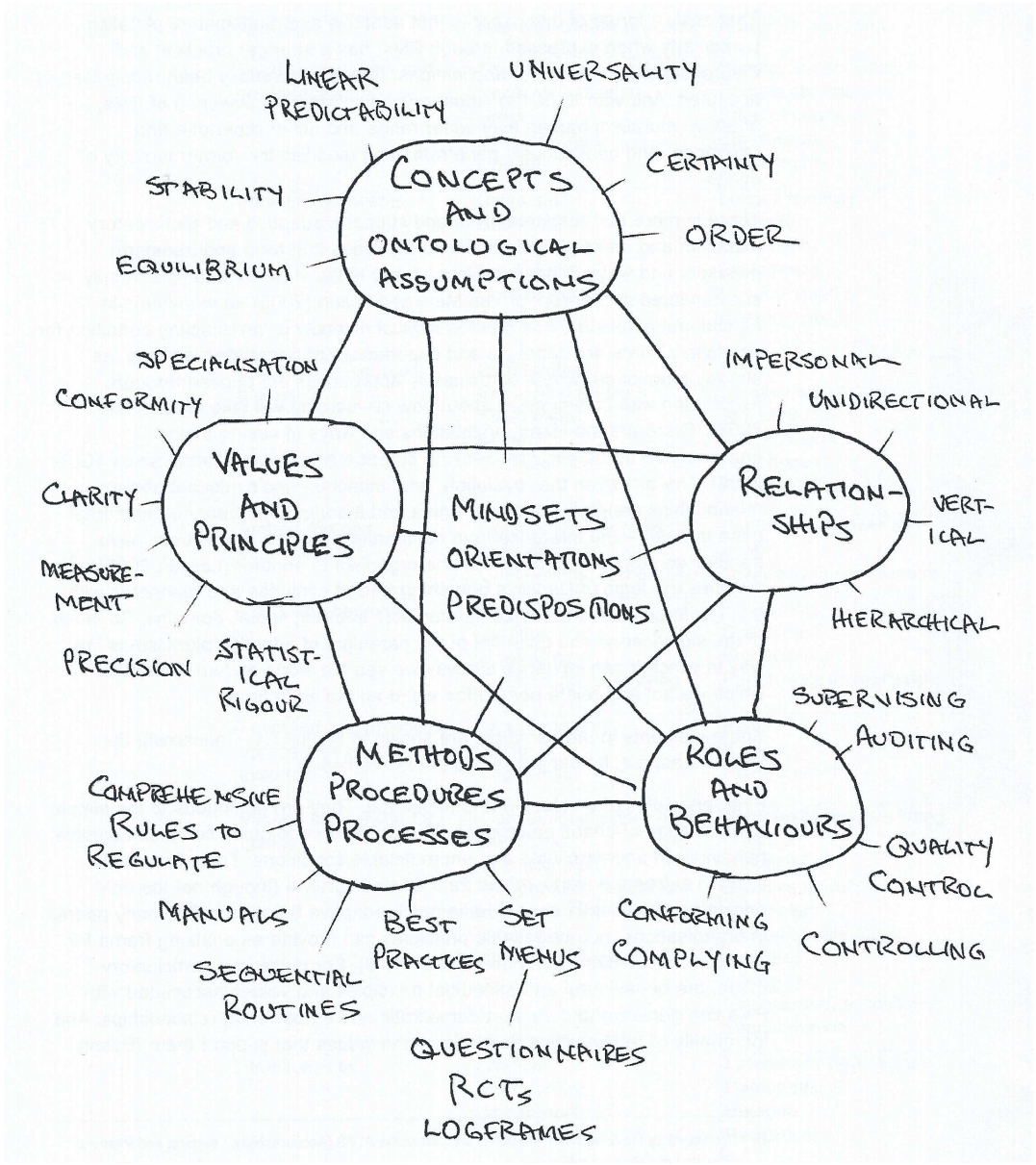
10. If development support involves interacting with others in diverse and complex situations, it follows that it is inescapably characterised by a combination of uncertainty, mediation and adaptation. This means that it cannot usefully be seen as or managed as a service industry, in which defined services, such as health or sanitation, are delivered to meet the largely predictable needs of identified users in ways are already known and understood[77]. We understand development to be a knowledge industry. In a knowledge industry, as we discussed above, every initiative is unique, specific to its circumstances and to the people engaged with it. Although much existing knowledge and experience may be called on, no initiative starts with a known or certain 'solution' or 'best practice'. In other words the use of the word 'knowledge' in the term 'knowledge industry' or 'knowledge initiative' does not imply that the desired 'knowledge' already exists but that it has to be created. It therefore always involves a process of challenging and overcoming ignorance. Furthermore, because the knowledge created and used most usually comes from a variety of roles, locations and technical disciplines, it is almost always a collaborative process. Collaborative co-creation of knowledge, especially when it involves collaboration outside each contributor's existing areas of knowledge, is also, almost by definition, an emergent process.

[77] Note: reference quote from previous director of Oxfam

11. We describe development support as a 'knowledge industry' because its practice involves new ways of creating, absorbing and using a diverse range of knowledges. The term also links development practice to those new business models or modes of production, discussed above, which are competing to establish themselves in societies North and South. It articulates the contribution we believe that learning from 'development', that is positive change in other societies subject both to similar and different pressures than those experienced in the North, can contribute to our understanding of change processes in our own societies. For us, development support presents an opportunity both to show solidarity with others and to participate in profound and mutually beneficial learning.

12. An excellent example of the profound changes of approach needed if development support is to adapt to the actual realities of development itself, and one which is directly related to understanding and managing development support, is provided by Robert Chambers, doyen of the study participatory methodologies in development. He contrasts what he calls the dominant paradigm of neo-Newtonian practice in development thinking, oriented around objects, with a paradigm of adaptive pluralism, oriented around social processes. Using the concepts which together constitute his definition of a paradigm, he maps the paradigm of neo-Newtonian practice in the figure opposite[78].

[78] Note: Chambers, R. Paradigms, Poverty and Adaptive Pluralism, IDS Working Papers, no 344, 2010 . The figures reproduced here are on p 46-47 http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/j.2040-0209.2010.00344_2.x/abstract accessed 27/08/2013



Elements in a Paradigm of Neo-Newtonian Practice

13. Chambers suggests an alternative, which he calls 'Adaptive Pluralism'. This he maps as in the diagram opposite and defines as:

'Paradigmatic elements and relationships associated with people as adaptive agents, with eclectic and participatory methodologies, and with ontological assumptions of complexity such as non-linearity, unpredictability and emergence.' (p. 7)

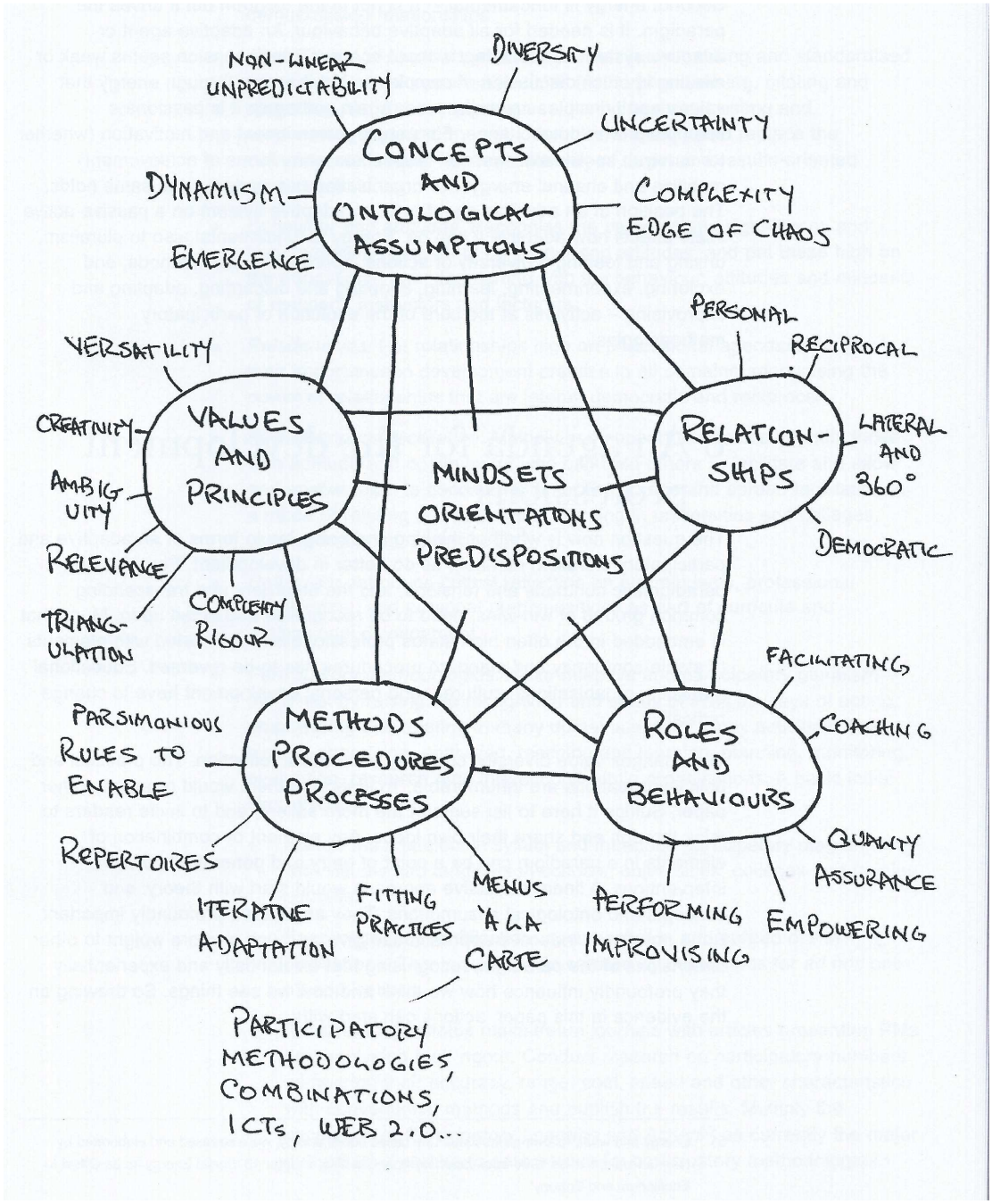
14. He contrasts this approach with the current emphasis on 'supervising, auditing, controlling, conforming, complying', extremely common in many fields of life but particularly in development support. It has led to a culture of evaluation in which proving conformity with the plan has almost become more important that the activity itself and is being applied to intangible, unmeasurable processes. One is reminded of locomotives steaming across the Steppes, pulling nothing, but meeting their mileage targets for the Soviet five year plans of old. As Chambers states:

> *So in the name of rigour and accountability what fits and works better in the controllable, predictable, standardised and measurable conditions of the things and procedures paradigm has been increasingly applied to the uncontrollable, unpredictable, diverse and less measurable paradigm of people and processes. The misfit is little perceived by those furthest from field realities and with most power.* (2010, p. 14)

15. Charles Dhewa, who works on knowledge and development with rural groups in Zimbabwe, expressed similar frustration with the demands of the 'system' in a message to KM4Dev in May 2013:

> *Our collective headache is trying to achieve intangible outcomes using tangible things. Investing X amount of dollars to improve people's lives; spending X number of days and dollars to persuade poor people to change their habits*[79].

[79] Note: http://www.km4dev.org/profiles/blogs/meanwhile-on-the-km4dev-mailing-list-m-e-of-km-a-fascinating-disc



Elements in a Paradigm of Adaptive Pluralism

16. Duncan Green, now strategy director at Oxfam GB, considers that:

> *There is little doubt in my mind that the neo-Newtonian paradigm has become more and more dominant in development action, if not development thinking. It exerts a powerful influence – for better or for worse – on the way much of the system works. For balance, we need a countervailing pull*[80].

We agree that a countervailing pull is necessary. We would go a step further and argue that a cultural shift is required to enable, purposefully, more *creative* landscapes. Purpose is based on intent and, as we have argued above, intent along with its ethical underpinnings needs to be explicit. The intent behind a preference for approaching development support through the exploratory development of creative landscapes is based on values which are reforming, more pluralistic, more open, more inclusive, more respectful, more creative. In the neo-Newtonian paradigm, there is more likely to be an emphasis on value for money (narrowly defined), control and efficiency. These can be important, of course, but do not in and of themselves generate any development. They therefore offer a very limited intent.

17. Our focus throughout is how to reform development support so that it is better able to support local development processes, supporting the actions, aspirations and knowledge of those who will be most directly affected. In the process, democracy, governance, empowerment, equity, freedom etc. can and should be valuable concepts, underpinning plans for intervention and support. However, their real value depends on an interpretation of their meaning that connects these concepts to those daily realities which the people most involved in any development process are trying to improve.

[80] Note: http://www.oxfamblogs.org/fp2p/?p=4466

18. We end this section as it started, with an analogy from war, albeit a very different war. Between 1963 and independence in 1974, the people of Guinea Bissau, less than two per cent literate, dispersed across the villages and creeks of their land, took on and eventually defeated the 70,000 strong army of a NATO country[81]. In the process they received (political and material but not physical) support from much of the outside world in the name of anti-colonialism, freedom and liberation. But, Amilcar Cabral, their leader until his assassination in 1973, was very clear as to what this meant:

> *'Always bear in mind that the people are not fighting for ideas, for the things in anyone's head. They are fighting to win material benefits, to live better and in peace, to see their lives go forward, to guarantee the future of their children...'[82]p.70*

19. Basil Davidson witnessed and wrote about this struggle. He, who prior to becoming the first European to pioneer an African oriented history of Africa, had been a British army colonel liaising and living with partisan movements in Hungary, Yugoslavia and Italy in the Second World War, had a perfect understanding of the communications requirements of such a grounded, realistic approach:

> *'But this means that everything has to be explained not by 'staff appreciations' or other written briefings, useless amongst a largely illiterate people but useless anyway as a means of invoking active and intelligent participation: it has to be explained by oral statement and debate. For this is the kind of warfare in which individual thought and action count*

[81] Note: The country in question was Portugal. The wars in its African colonies also had the positive effect of leading to the overthrow of dictatorship in Portugal itself. In the interests of completeness, it has to be added that the post- independence history of Guinea Bissau has been far less successful, especially since a second coup in 1999.

[82] Note: Extract from PAIGC party directive 1965, published as 'Tell no lies, claim no easy victories' in Cabral, A. 'Revolution in Guinea: an African people's struggle', stage 1 London, 1969,

> *for more than anything else and count all the time. This is a kind of warfare in which the volunteer….is there not only to fight for himself but also to think for himself. This is a kind of warfare, accordingly, in which orders which seem to make no sense will probably be ignored.' (p130-131)*[83]

We would replace the word 'warfare' with 'development', and expand the 'himself' to include 'herself' (which Basil would not in the least have minded, and, as we explain below (1.8.4), would better reflect the realities of that struggle). If we did so we might give new purpose and energy to the connections between development support and actual development, replacing tired monologues with purposeful dialogue.

[83] Note: Davidson, B. 'The Liberation of Guinea: aspects of an African Revolution', Penguin, 1969

1.7 Communications and Development Support

Communication

1. There are many types of knowledge and many sources of information. Finding and using them involves communication, be it static or dynamic, in real time or asynchronous, uni-directional (one to one or one to many), two-way or multi-directional. All communication, even if it is the most stridently uni-directional, has to incorporate both the statement and its accurate reception if it is to be described as communication[84]. Saying something which is misunderstood does not count as communication.

2. The connection between communication and purpose is problematic. We live in a world of such frenzied attempts to sell us stuff or to frame our perceptions in ways which suit particular interests that it is easy to forget that there are many different reasons to communicate and also that you do not need an articulated reason at all. You can sing a song because you are happy or read the Song of Solomon because it is beautiful.

3. As consultants, we are often asked to assess – or even to measure – the impact of a particular piece of knowledge on the processes to which it is supposed to be relevant. The common assumption is that knowledge has a specific purpose, that realising this purpose in a limited period of time can be achieved and be recognised and that its value can be calculated by comparing the costs of its production to the benefits realised by the purpose. This assumption, as we explain in other chapters, offers only the most limited understanding of knowledge, economics or management. It

[84] Note: This is well explained, with repeated reference to the work of Michael Polyani, in G. Walsham, 'Knowledge Management: The Benefits and Limitations of Computer Systems', European Management Journal, Vol. 19, No. 6, pp. 599–608, 2001, see

may be applicable to questions such as the time of the next train but most communication, even that which has a definite purpose, is far more open-ended. We do not know exactly where it will lead to but we want or need to find out, which is exactly why we make the effort to communicate.

4. In most professional life, by far the greatest attention is given to the active steps we take to communicate to others. We can be simply making a factual record of what exists or what has happened, as in various types of report or audit; we may be trying to interest our peers in a particular piece of work; we may be wanting to make our own voices heard or to represent the voices of others; we may be interested in assembling various forms of evidence with a view to advocating a particular line of action; we may be seeking to instruct or educate others. Most of us, at least to some extent and at some times, communicate for all these reasons. All of them are based on us having information or knowledge that we think other people either want to know, ought to know or, in various organisational or training settings, must know.

5. Less attention, we would argue, is given to processes of listening. This is a pity because, analysed collectively, if people (including us) are not alert to the need to listen, then they are unlikely to get the full benefit from the many and various efforts, listed above, which other people (including us) make to communicate to them. The problem is that in a context of all-pervasive information, listening has to be a selective activity. It is easy to select and listen to that information that you know you want to know: far less easy to identify that information out of all that you don't know, which might be of great importance or value. Listening is also intrinsically harder to do. When we speak or write, we generally use means with which we feel comfortable. When other people are

expressing themselves, which they may or may not do with us as part of their imagined audience, they may choose to use means with which we are not familiar.

6. The best and most common way of finding out what we need to know is to ask other people, be they friends, colleagues or professional peers. This leads us to the third area of communication, that of interaction. Interactive communication with other people takes place both within the formalised procedures of professional practice or of academic or political discourse and through more spontaneous exchanges. It is a vital part of sharing existing knowledge and of creating new knowledge. Sometimes individuals make new 'discoveries' at the end of structured processes of sharing and discussion of existing knowledge. Alternatively, as we will explore in 2.2, there may be a more explicitly collective engagement with others aiming to imagine how things might be, to simulate, stimulate and co-create new possibilities.

7. All forms of communication can encompass the linear exchange of basic information. However all also have the potential to act as examples of an emergent process. Even a simple enquiry about the time of a train may elicit a response which includes the information that the train is late and that the option of taking a bus instead might be quicker. All listening which explores what is not already known and all interactions which seek to generate new ideas or practice are, by their very nature, emergent processes and need to be recognised as such.

8. All forms of communication also take place within some form of social context. Language, vocabulary, means of communication, place and time of communication, surrounding social and cultural norms all form part of this context, as does the wider information

landscape, with its possible points of shared or contested reference. The context in which information is expressed and that in which it is received may or may not be the same. The nature of the contexts in which communication is attempted can have a strong impact on its likely success.

Communication for development

9. Development support involves bringing people together to work on complex issues across almost every conceivable boundary of discipline, gender, culture, language, status and place. To work, communication with a range of actors at different levels is essential. We make these points above about the very basics of communication by way of an introduction to a reflection on what are – or should be – the most important issues to think about when talking about communication and development support.

10. In the world of development support, 'communications strategies' are often dominated by how organisations promote themselves to donors, to their peers and to the wider public. Such activities may be essential from a political or fundraising point of view but they are not integral to the process of providing development support. Another strand of 'development communications' specialises in trying to communicate 'development messages', often about health or farming, to 'beneficiaries' who, in the eyes of the organisation concerned are believed to need such information[85]. Again this may be legitimate but suggesting that telling people what they should do is a communications priority, is, in our view, quite revealing. We would argue that the core requirement for development support organisations is being sure that they know

[85] Note: In a sign of how confused these categories and their management become, DFID, in 2005(?) put its entire 'development communications' work and budget into the hands of the department responsible for telling the rest of the British establishment how clever their minister was.

how to do their own jobs. This in turn requires a profound and continuously evolving understanding of the realities in which their work is immersed and which it seeks to change. This has to involve a lot of listening and learning. It also, given that no 'development' takes place independently of the people who promote it or the people whose lives it is intended to affect, requires a capacity to interact effectively, that means to communicate with others. At the minimum, this must be to the level of maintaining appropriate working relationships with these others: it is far better if such interaction enables processes of mutual and iterative learning as the work evolves[86].

11. Our contention, therefore, is that whilst all areas of communication are important to development support organisations, the ones that are fundamental to their effectiveness are those of listening to and interacting with all the stakeholders with whom they work as they plan, implement and evaluate their development support. Doing this well requires some detailed consideration of how the 'communications basics', outlined in the last section, play out in the context of development support.

Listening

12. It is very hard to learn to speak without having the capacity to listen. Sadly, this truism is little understood in the development support sector and the lists of examples of poor listening that come from any discussion of the subject by experienced development support workers, especially those from and working in the global South, are almost endless[87]. This is well confirmed by one of the very

[86] Insert: This may be an appropriate place for a note about 1st, 2nd and ?3rd degree learning if this has not been covered elsewhere.
[87] Insert: ? Here or somewhere else – box of references about relationships and aid inc Emblem, Eyben, Hannah, partnership person, Norwegian churches, Adams

few projects we know of which has systematically researched the experience of 'aid recipients' in this regard. The Listening Project spoke to some 6,000 people involved at the receiving end of international aid. Although the vast majority appreciated the possible benefits of development support, the interviews uncovered systematic communications failings in virtually every aspect of its operation. In its final report, two core failings were defined[88]. Both echo our own longstanding arguments. One was the failure, when applying standardised policies and procedures, to adequately understand local contexts – in other words a lack of local knowledge. The other was the division of the process into 'providers' and 'receivers', with the latter becoming the objects of the providers' decision-making and planning. This distancing of people from participation in their own futures, and the disrespect implied by such a relationship, undermines the potential for creative collaboration, as well as for actually learning about local realities.

13. It is worth thinking a bit about why this is the case. Most people who work in development support choose their careers because of a genuine interest in the other cultures they will encounter and a desire to help other people. Many development support organisations try to work in participatory ways. Others spend not insignificant amounts of money on projects intended to give local people a voice[89]. Why does this somehow not add up?

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[88] Note: Mary Anderson, Dayna Brown and Isabella Jean, 'Time to Listen: hearing people on the receiving end of international aid' CDA Collaborative Learning, Cambridge, MA, USA, November 2012

[89] Insert: But 'giving' people a voice and actually listening to what they are saying are two different things. IKM Emergent came across several examples of this phenomenon. At the workshop on Digital Story Telling, co-hosted with IT4Change in Bengaluru, an employee of a leading international NGO said that she had little problem securing funding for such activity but that no-one in her organisation was interested in studying the result. Another commented that she received disapproving looks when watching audio-visual material on her computer because such activity was not perceived as real work. More generally, the 'How Wide are the Ripples'….

14. One set of answers derives from the inequalities of power in the relationship between development support and those being supported. Some aspects of this relationship relate directly to communication and to the types of ignorance characterised below (1.10). One is that the development support sector works according to increasingly homogenised professional and bureaucratic norms. Whilst these norms can be challenged and change over time, they form the solid basis of the working day. Opinions and artefacts which cannot be accommodated within these norms are therefore likely to be ignored. This is not necessarily deliberate: people may simply be unaware of their meaning and value. Adrian Holliday introduces his book 'Intercultural Communication and Ideology'[90] with the question '*how is it possible that, in such a climate of sensitivity towards people from other cultural backgrounds, there is still such a lack of awareness and understanding?*' (p2). Much of his analysis concentrates on the problem, which we return to in considering the ontologies of knowledge (2.1) and the perception and use of artefacts (2.3), of the original framing of Western thinking in a whole range of disciplines which deal with differences between people. Cultural studies, as with anthropology, development studies, gender studies and large parts of psychology and sociology, were developed at times of very clear attitudes as to what or whose attributes were more desirable or more advanced. Attempts to reform such thinking are constrained by the theoretical frameworks in which it was created. Thus, in the example of mainstream cultural studies, it may no longer acceptable to label one culture as 'superior' to another but the terms in which 'culture' is studied or understood remain locked in their European roots. Holliday concludes '*Increased understanding may not seem problematic at all for a Western civilization that makes understanding its bread and butter, but the understanding that is*

[90] Note: Adrian Holliday, 2011, 'Intercultural Communication and Ideology', SAGE Publications, London

needed is of complexities which are not part of its normal image of the world' (p195).

15. The problem he describes is not one of conscious exclusion but one where another way of perceiving or valuing some aspect of unfamiliar behaviour has been filtered out by lenses originally provided with the aim of helping observation. It can be seen as an example of what we describe below as simple ignorance, albeit one which requires the unlearning of established practice in order to overcome.

16. A more insidious expression of power is the belief, referred to in the discussion on ethics (1.9.8), that there is no intrinsic value in listening to what other people have to say. This is a form of malign ignorance which rests on the assumption that people with less power, wealth, status - or of the wrong gender - have nothing valuable to say. In this perspective, the main purpose of encouraging others to express themselves is the instrumental value it has in providing the appearance of engagement and perhaps in creating conditions where they are more likely to listen to you. Finally, there is the more direct malign ignorance, which is created when powerful and unaccountable people simply have no reason to listen to views which they don't like or which challenge their power.

17. The power issues can and should be tackled, at least at some level and to some extent. However, questions about our capacity to listen also need to be addressed. For many of us, in part because such historic incentives and constraints have led to little prioritisation of or investment in it, this is not very developed. We may be able to listen but do not always hear[91]. Beyond the fundamental aptitude of

[91] Insert: The late Odhiambo Anacleti, the first ever African born director of the Africa division of Oxfam GB, selected two stories to try and illustrate this

being able to show a real interest in what other people have to say, we would focus on three elements. One is the subject of 2.3: how to understand a wider range of communications artefacts to broaden our understanding of diverse knowledges. Learning in this area is an example of creative ignorance: that is where our ignorance, if recognised, can stimulate new knowledge and new practice. The other is the need for connections between listening and creating space for transformation, which relates to the idea of transformative ignorance (1.10.).

18. We discuss below (1.9.9) the idea of a missionary being prepared to listen to other beliefs with the same openness to discovery that he or she was hoping that others would offer to what they had to say. This idea was echoed in a story by IKM Emergent's chair, Cees Hamelink, about the time he was facilitating a dialogue between various opposing parties at the time of the Lebanese civil war. He asked the packed hall if everyone was prepared to enter into a dialogue and received a wall of approval. 'No', he said, 'I mean are you prepared to listen to others to the extent you may walk out of this room having changed some of your core beliefs'. Much muttering ensued, followed by two thirds of the audience walking out. Cees then started a dialogue with those who remained.

19. Such a process is not, generally, about being right or wrong

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difficulty. The first tells of the delivery of some manual grinding mills, intended to reduce women's labour and create a space for women's discussions but never used, to a village on the mistaken assumption that such a project had been agreed with the women concerned. In the second a foreign development support worker, keen to provide a safe water supply to a village, discusses, plans and implements of project of well digging and maintenance without grasping that what is of most interest to the villagers is that the people trained to maintain the wells might then be able to find paid work in the city. In both stories the problem is that of the aid workers trying to listen but perhaps only hearing what they wanted to hear. Odhiambo Anacleti, 1995, 'The Mills that were wanted but not required – and another story'. Development in Practice 5:3 pp236-239

but about hearing something which had not been heard before[92]. This clearly requires ways of what might be termed deep listening, which are not common. Part of this involves a capacity to learn about someone else's knowledge not through the prism of one's own knowledge framework but in terms of theirs. We are not sure if, as a replicable skill rather than as a leap of imagination, this capacity exists, at least within the mainstream of Western societies. But there seems no reason why an understanding of what is involved in such a capacity could not be developed and taught. There still, however remains a need for a philosophical readiness to participate. We won't make a habit of quoting religious leaders, but the process of deep listening was perhaps also described by Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, when he reflected on the final stages of a long and often acrimonious debate within his church that ended with an agreement to consecrate its first women bishops.

> '*There has been a real sense of gentleness and grace in the way it worked out over the last few months. There's been much more listening, much more graciousness, much more willingness to treat each other in a human way. That's been a major cultural change in the way the church has worked'*[93]

Is it too much to expect that a development support industry, supposedly based on human solidarity, could be open to similar cultural change?

Contexts of communication

20. As already mentioned (1.7.8), understanding of the contexts in which communication taking place is vital to its success. This is of particular importance to development support because it operates in such a wide range of contexts and, unlike communication in an already existing line of work or academic discipline, almost always

[92] Note: Pete Cranston reference
[93] Justin Welby interviewed on BBC TV, Newsnight, 15th July 2014

involves multiple contexts. Obviously relationships - of power, of trust, of history, of individuals - both within and between groups of people form a vital part of that context. So do a number of communications choices.

21. Communication artefacts often have different meanings and value in different contexts. To a large extent the choice of the artefact used – to either speak or to seek to understand – will depend on the contexts of communication. This is why we are placing so much emphasis on giving thought to their use.

22. All communication and all knowledge depends on language. Indeed, according to T.P.Waldron '*Man is man through language alone*'[94]. For us, this certainly means shared spoken or written languages and we would include visual and body languages, although recognising that our understandings of these and the extent to which they are shared is much less developed. For almost everyone, their first language forms the context of their life, being at the core of their identity and how they make sense of their surroundings. It is therefore somewhat shocking that development support, which is supposed to help people realise themselves and to make more productive associations with their environment, works almost exclusively in European languages which, across most of Africa, Asia and large parts of Latin America form, at best, the second language of most citizens, especially poor citizens[95]. Furthermore,

[94] T.P.Waldron, 1985, '*Principles of Language and Mind*', Routledge and Kegan Paul, p 198. We note the original definition of the word 'man' in English as 'human being, person; later, adult male' (Chambers, Dictionary of Etymology 1988).

[95] Note: There are some exceptions to this claim, particularly relating to faith based organisations such as the Catholic Church and, from the US protestant tradition, SIL International. In both cases, it has been questioned if the purpose of learning local languages is primarily to better learn about local societies or to be better equipped to change them. The only secular development organisation we know of which seriously invests in equipping their volunteers with local language skills is the Peace Corps.

after five hundred years of contact between Africa and 'modern' Europe and, in many places, over fifty years of independence, there are no high level professional qualifications available for interpretation or translation from or to native African languages[96]. To put this into perspective, this means that more professional resources are dedicated to something like ensuring an agreed definition of wool fibres at a single committee meeting of the European Parliament than have ever been applied to ensuring that any participatory engagement with any rural community in Africa has been based on a full knowledge of what is actually said.

23. Languages are not pieces of interchangeable code. Each language has developed (and develops) over time in the places and in the lives of those who speak it. To be articulated, knowledges have to be shaped by whichever language is used to express them. As Ngugi wa Thiongo explains, using as an example the relationship between Caliban and Prospero in Shakespeare's play, 'The Tempest'.

> *'(Prospero) tells Caliban, you did not know yourself, your language was mere babble. I gave you purpose. Caliban curses Prospero in the very language with which Prospero had hoped to tame him. He rebels, in words at least, but it does not alter the fact that the structure and organization of knowledge inevitably reinforces the master and servant relationship'.*[97]

Of course, population movements over history have meant many people no longer speak their 'native' language and many languages have become extinct. Nor do 'inherited' languages cease to grow. English has distinct variations in vocabulary, construction and rhythm as it is spoken in various parts of the world. Such variations clearly

[96] Note: We are indebted to Dr Wangui wa Goro for this observation (made in 2008).
[97] Note:Ngugi wa Thiong'o,2012, 'Globalectics: Theory and the Politics of Knowing',Columbia University Press, p.29

reflect the lives lived in each location and can and should be respected. This does not, in our view, excuse the practice of development support organisations of imposing a secondary language on their supposed beneficiaries as they claim to be 'empowering' them.

24. It is not only a question of which language is chosen as the medium of communication but also of constraints as to how any language is used. Every language contains a wealth of vocabulary and expression which has evolved in relation to the lives of its speakers and, in particular to allow them to explore their relationship with their natural environment[98]. The language of development support, by contrast, is generally terse and dry. This is not surprising. It is a sector in which many people have to work in their second or third language and so will lack confidence in experimentation. It often works to (we would argue) unreasonably fast schedules. It has obligations for keeping clear records of how other people's money is spent. It is therefore appropriate that most of its internal communications are factual and to the point. However, it is also a sector which needs to develop a profound understanding of the contexts of other people's lives. It needs to be able to benefit from the insights that a use of more poetic and expressive language can offer. It also needs access to expertise in many forms of interpretation[99].

25 This links to the advantages of connecting to a wider cultural context than that simply that of the work in hand. Communication

[98] Note: Robert Macfarlane's book 'Landmarks' (Hamish Hamilton, 2015) provides a very recent exploration of this in relation to English, along with warnings about how the gradual 'denaturalisation' of the language since the industrial revolution threatens our ability to understand our own environment
[99] Insert: This, as we discuss in the section on Traducture, goes far beyond simple translation of words. It also refers to changes of meaning – either over time or in different social contexts – in the same language.

benefits from all parties to it having some shared points of reference. These exist at various levels. One feature of the development sector is its large number of expatriate staff, emanating from many points of the globe. It has an international working culture based on a largely but not completely shared set of values, working habits, life experiences and cultural references. More important, we would argue, are the cultural points of reference which relate to the society in which development is taking place. These include local media, popular music, theatre and sport as well as the literature of the region. We are not suggesting that development support workers need to be expert in such media, only that if they engage with them to some extent they will have a better understanding of the society in which they are working and that their work is likely to be more effective as a result. The extent to which they do so varies. Many individuals choose to play an active part in their host societies. However, over the last twenty years or so, such engagement has lessened with the 'expatriate experience' moving from immersion in local communities to a more separate and, sometimes, even gated existence[100]. Worries about crime and security have been partly to blame, but few development support organisations recognise the value of the 'wider contexts' of communication in their recruitment or briefing processes[101]. Some explicitly favour a globalised 'professionalism' over local knowledge. At best, this demonstrates an erroneous faith in the possibility of 'development' as the imposition of globalised external knowledge. More probably, given the uncritical assumption that 'global knowledge' equates to Western knowledge, it echoes the colonial disdain for colleagues who 'went

[100] Note: Ref Mark Duffield

[101] Note: Reference to Sarah's posts on development and literature. It is also the case that popular communication also has quite a lot to say about development itself and can offer valuable perspectives as to how it is perceived that can offer insights unavailable to statistical analysis or formal studies. 'Popular Representations of Development' (Routledge 2014), edited by David Lewis, Dennis Dodgers and Michael Woolcock, offers some valuable essays on this subject.

native'

26. The final points to make about the contexts of communication is that they are often complex and are constantly changing. It is not enough for an organisation to have a 'policy' for engagement in a certain country and then just follow it. It's not just that social relationships, artefacts and that the devices they may use are changing all the time. They are changing differently in different places. A person or organisation wishing to engage with a society in working needs to pay continuous attention to the informational spaces in which the people they are working with live. This is true anywhere but even more important if you are working in an unfamiliar environment. In response to some claims from one large INGO about the effectiveness of their ICT based communications in Zimbabwe, local knowledge specialist (and IKM Emergent participant) Charles Dhewa posted

*'There is a big danger of over-claiming the impact of ICTs. For instance…*the stories*…..do not mention other existing communication methods in farming communities yet farmers do not depend on one information sharing pathway. Unless one can compare the efficacy and relevance of ICTs with other channels, the impact of ICTs alone is difficult to pin down. One would expect a mapping of existing information dissemination systems in particular communities and these include: word of mouth, field days, agriculture shows, radio, gossip, rumour, newspapers, notice boards, weekly meetings, clubs, WhatsApp, SMS, etc. Given the complexity of climate information it is far- fetched to claim that SMS can be the most reliable way of sharing information between farmers and technocrats. From our experience in informal agriculture markets, social media like SMS are just an extension of existing communication pathways. The most popular media may not be the most useful. It's time to be more critical and*

reflective rather than promoting one-sided 'solutions'. [102]
Trying to understand local knowledgescapes needs to be part of the practice of living and working in another country.

27. Good communication is not easy. It is only human to have difficulty listening to things one might not want to hear. But this is hardly an excuse for organisations that proclaim their capacity to work effectively across all kinds of boundaries. Development support faces major challenges if it is to achieve its communications' imperatives of listening to and interacting with its multiple stakeholders. Is this a problem? Yes, in the sense that current practice is nowhere near fit for purpose. No, in the sense that the challenge can be faced. This is one of the areas where development support organisations, if they pay close attention to their working realities and to the networks of relationships of which they are part, have an incredible opportunity to explore new dynamics of learning and expression. It should be fun. It should lead to better communication and better development support. It could play a significant part in improving mutual understanding and solidarity across a range of global issues, well beyond those of development. It does, however, require some real thought about what is done and how. For us, the three key areas of this process are the need to have a better understanding of the dynamics of communication, explored in 2.3, of the artefacts we and others use as we attempt to communicate and of what needs to be done so that we can find these artefacts when we need them.

[102] Note: Charles Dhewa, post to KM4Dev list, 29/03/2016

1.8 Gender, Knowledge and Development

1. Unless stated otherwise, it seems sensible to assume that 'development' applies to everyone in a society, both men and women. A definition of development which is based on the world view, the aspirations and the choices of those whose lives are supposed to be 'developing' poses challenging questions about gender. Are we talking about a single development pathway which is identical for men and women? If not, how, in any society, are the specific perspectives and priorities of women to be accommodated? Who determines the relative importance of inequalities, such as those enforced through patriarchal norms, within a society and those, such as the multiple legacies of colonialism, which exist between a particular society and the world systems in which it has to operate? These are important questions, which go beyond the competence and ambition of this book. We do, however, see a close link between these questions and those that we are posing here about knowledge and development. Questions such as what constitutes relevant knowledge, who decides and how, how is it created and how it can be used to help the lives of people are all central to how understandings of gender form part of the definition of development.

2. As always, it helps to clarify what we are talking about. We take a flexible approach to many of the possible definitions involved. We do not see male and female as binary opposites but as categories of people who have both shared and divergent characteristics to differing degrees according to the individuals and the circumstances involved. Similarly, these characteristics are based on an almost infinite permutation of biological and social factors, again depending on the context of whatever aspect of life is being considered. A number of often conflicting understandings of gender and gender

differences and how they affect life exist within most societies worldwide and also differ between societies. Gender identity is also something that can be strongly felt and expressed by individuals. To use the word complexity in this context is almost an understatement.

3. It is also good practice to set out the historical roots of any argument. The second half of the 20th century saw major if incomplete progress towards greater gender equality in many parts of the world. As with every other 'reality' discussed in this book, a person's understanding of change will have been shaped by what has happened around them in their own society. For us, in the North, most politically progressive movements over the 19th and early 20th centuries included some commitments to gender equality, although the extent to which these were prioritised or recognised as representing an issue distinct from class relationships varied considerably. It took the explosive energy of the Women's Liberation Movement, rooted in the blatant double standards of the social changes of the 1960s and in particular how these related to sexual relationships, to challenge new oppressions whilst rediscovering and reinvigorating the struggles against longer recognised ones. Germaine Greer's the Female Eunuch was published in 1970, the same year she and other feminists co-edited the Cunt Power issue of OZ magazine[103]. In a manner similar to Basil Davidson's reclamation of Africa's history in a context where the academic establishment claimed no such history existed, so Sheila Rowbotham published 'Women Resistance and Revolution' in 1972 and 'Hidden from History' in 1973. The following decade saw major advances in understanding the roles and needs of women in society in political, intellectual and social domains. The domain of development support was no exception.

[103] Note: OZ, no 29, July 1970

4. However, this chronology does not entirely match and certainly does not precede other important influences on the emergence of gender as a significant issue for development and its support. Nationalist, anti-colonial and anti-imperialist struggles were a major political feature of the twentieth century and the processes of political mobilisation they catalysed, trying to portray a society as united against an unwelcome outsider, always involved women, at least to some extent. Particularly in those cases which led to protracted guerrilla war, the full involvement of women was both essential to the mechanics of the struggle and in many cases came to be seen as a positive outcome in its own right. This in turn required attention to and at least some resolution of problematic aspects of gender relationships within the society in question. Such processes were an explicit feature of the revolutionary movements of China, Vietnam, Mozambique, Eritrea and Nicaragua amongst others. To return to our previous example of Guinea Bissau, the fact is that by the time the Female Eunuch was published in 1970, Carmen Pereira, later the post-independence co-ordinator of the National Commission of Women, had already been the liberation movement's chief political commissar on the Northern Front for four years and, despite the many other barriers women had and still have to overcome in that country, '*I never had any difficulty with men not obeying my orders*'[104]. The liberation movement had also, since the system was set up in 1966, insisted that at least two of the elected five member village committees, which were the backbone of its organisation of its liberated areas, should be women. As far as we know, this is the first requirement for a quota of women's political representation anywhere in the world.

5. A third stream of influence can be traced through modernist thinking and related scientific and social advances. These saw no

[104] Interview with Mike Powell, Bissau, June 1976

rational basis for prevailing divisions of labour and thus challenged the basis for a number of traditional social distinctions whilst creating better health and education systems for all. Investment in gender related issues, such as maternal and child health services and organised childcare, were increasingly seen not simply as social benefits but also as important components of a functioning modern economy.

6. For their initial advocates, all three streams appeared revolutionary and new. As they have all developed, however, so has knowledge about their many antecedents, knowledge which, having not been deemed relevant or significant by political and intellectual elites over very long periods of time, had become all but invisible. In fact, almost every aspect of gender relations has been contested in the vast majority of human societies over the whole of history. For example, feminist theologians, who may themselves have been inspired by the social changes in the last fifty years, are able to argue their cases in relation to all the world's main religions, citing sources and debates that go right back to their foundations[105].

7. With regard to development and its support, these various streams of influence gradually built a strong and lasting consensus that gender, and related practical issues, were of fundamental importance to any understanding of development. The first major manifestation of this was the UN Decade of Women (1976-1985). Ideas were further developed at major UN conferences in 1985 and 1995, in the detailed work of many of its agencies and the inclusion of a number of women's rights clauses in human rights agreements. This formal recognition of the issue was both supported and challenged by the increasing activity and demands of both international and local NGOs and by social movements. For example, Oxfam (GB), a pioneering agency in this field, created one

[105] Note: References for all major religions

of the development support sector's first specialised 'gender and development units' in 1984.

8. The problem has been that whilst there is now a very widespread consensus that any strategy for development support needs to pay serious attention to gender relations, there is less consensus on what this means or how it should be achieved. As a result, numerous arguments break out about what should be done and why, and, as always, organisations and individuals manoeuvre to try and ensure that their view prevails.

9. Such a reality raises a number of questions for us. Firstly, we see conflicts arising from a lack of recognition – or as we describe it in 1.9.7 a plain ignorance - of the multiple sources of the original consensus, and the multiple knowledges on which they are based. There is an assumption that everyone is talking about the same thing. This leads to a failure to establish the type of dialogue between the different streams of thought which could stimulate a process of creative ignorance (1.9.8). We see this as connected to a lack of capacity to work productively in a context of multiple knowledges and a clinging on to a philosophically outdated desire for certainty, for single correct answers.

10. That said, it can also be argued that real progress with a tangible effect on people's lives can be made without grasping such often painful nettles. On one level, an evidence based and 'fair' approach to gender issues can sit comfortably in the main streams of development and development support policy. Societies in which large groups of people are subject to violence and sexual exploitation, have little or no access to legal redress or to education, are excluded from work or from the flows of information and trade which make that work productive are unlikely to be societies which will be either cohesive or economically successful. When such oppression is based on grounds over which people have no control,

such as their race or gender, it is arguably even more dysfunctional. Thus many steps which aim to reform such situations can be and are taken for the good reasons that they are effective: that they improve social and economic wellbeing within that society. Such essentially instrumental reasons may or may not be supported by wider moral, religious or political arguments based on more intrinsic values.

11. The problem is that such reforms only go so far. By treating the exploited position of women within societies as a series of discrepancies which can be resolved, they do not explore let alone threaten what may be the underlying causes. In the process, similar organisational structures to those that have managed social processes in highly unequal ways are used to manage them in supposedly fair ways. Yes some women have always and many women now have the capacity to take leadership positions within such structures, but do those structures themselves inhibit the change they are supposed to promote? To revisit our discussion of working in a developmental way (1.6.6), is it possible to be responsive to and supportive of changes in gender roles and perceptions whilst constrained by the methods, hierarchies and concepts of knowledge and norms which formed the context in which such exploitation seemed 'normal'?

12. For many living and working in this field the answer is a clear 'no'. There is an understanding that gender inequalities are rooted not in 'the natural order' but in long established, if constantly shifting, ideologies of patriarchal power. These, in different ways in different societies, have insinuated themselves into every corner of human existence both social – production, reproduction, governance, religion, culture, knowledge – and private – identity, faith, hopes, fears, desires. For those that have come to understand the world in such a way, the process of reform, whilst possibly representing a positive stage in the process, is inherently flawed.

Without a far more profound change in how people think and how things are organised, such reforms are destined to be not only limited but very vulnerable to reversal. This is, in other words, another area where a change of paradigm is needed[106]. As a worker in the National Commission of Women in Guinea-Bissau put it in 1979,

> *'We are not fighting for a piece of the pie. The men control the pie and we don't want the men to give us a piece of their pie. For if we accept something that is given to us, even if it is half, we will never have the same power as those who gave it to us. They will still control it. What we want to do is to destroy this pie so that men and women, together, can build a new pie where women will be totally equal with men'*[107]

We think this makes a fundamental point. It moves the question on from whether the gender distribution of roles and rewards within a particular society are fair according to the current dynamics of that society to a recognition that the society itself is structured on biased and skewed assumptions about what these roles and rewards could be. More than that, these assumptions assail every individual and every institution within that society, including those actors concerned with the definition, creation and use of knowledge. This includes us. As we ourselves are shaped by these assumptions, or, at the least, by whatever steps we have taken to try and challenge them, it follows that our capacity to think and feel beyond them is highly constrained. We may philosophically know that other realities are both possible and desirable, but we cannot know for sure what exactly they are. We are again, challenged by our ignorance.

13. What this means in practice is that whilst there may be some obvious first steps, protesting about the most violent or extreme

[106] Note: reference to discussion of this term later in book
[107] Anonymised worker in the Women's Commission, quoted in Stephanie Urdang, 1979, Fighting Two Colonialisms: women in Guinea-Bissau, Monthly Review Press, New York, p 283.

elements of current practice, there is no blueprint for change. Not just most of the actual choices but even many of the options on which they should be based are simply not known to us now and were probably even less clear in 1966, 1970 or whenever the current tides of change began. There is an ongoing process of discovery and knowledge creation which needs to inform, shape and then be shaped by change. Some of the key features of this process are:

- It has to be emergent. We do not know exactly where we are heading. It will inevitably involve experimentation, trial and error and the enthusiastic pursuit of approaches which will later turn out to be less than ideal. There will be moments of opportunity and daring interspersed with times of caution. It is not a linear process.

- It has to be open both in the sense of being visible and in allowing full participation. It requires intellectual contributions. New theory is needed to accommodate and explain new concepts. New research is required to understand those aspects of daily life which have changed or which have come to be valued in new ways. New argument is needed both to debate new ideas and to defend them from those who seek to frustrate change. However, organised intellectual work can only contribute to and be informed by this process. Its essence lies in the lives and experience of ordinary people.

- It is exploratory. The process may start with a 'problem definition' of acutely experienced exploitation but very soon more subtle and complex issues may be uncovered. Because issues of gender relate to all areas of life from the public to the most intimate, the process of uncovering and exploring them is far from straightforward. How does someone know if a feeling they have is entirely personal or is in fact widely

shared? A number of collective approaches - reflection, consciousness raising, therapy, drama or other cultural expressions – need to be used to deepen understanding and to set agendas both for more formal intellectual labour and for collective action.

- It will uncover aspects of knowledge not previously recognised or valued. What is 'known' now relates to that which has been deemed important over time by, predominantly male, elites. There are important areas of life which we do not well understand, not least because they have not been seen as legitimate areas of study. Thus whilst Karl Marx talked of the political economy of the 'reproduction of the productive forces' alongside that of the modes of production[108], until recently it has been the latter which has been the focus of global economic and political debate, whilst the former has been often ignored. Even the term 'modes of reproduction' imposes an economistic analytical framework on the study of a domain of life which encompasses so much more. In most cultures, and especially since the industrial revolution reorganised working life, women have far greater influence on and often control of the 'interior' or domestic domain than they have in the public one. For much of history, including in most places the present, such a domestic domain involves a far larger and more complex set of relationships and activities than those of the small nuclear families, which seek to buy in all their needs, which is one current middle class model in more economically developed communities. The apparently secluded life of the 'home' is central to people's identity, culture and belief, to their psychological

[108] Not: Reference needed, Also to Engels, 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State', 1884

and sexual wellbeing, to the nurturing of children, to the care of the sick and infirm as well as being an important site of production and consumption of material goods for the maintenance and celebration of life. Yet, as a predominantly female domain, it has been one to which male elites have not only not attached little importance but about the working of which they have always been deeply ignorant. It is a domain rich in its own knowledges and patterns of communication. Is there anything inherently feminine in such knowledges or have they just emerged from an environment which happens to be predominantly female? We do not know. What is certain is that attempts to understand the dynamics of 'gender and development' need to understand the importance of such spaces and connect with the knowledges on which they are based[109].

- As with any process which explores multiple knowledges and ignorance across a range of boundaries and at many levels, it will need to create and use multiple forms of expression to communicate (in both directions) its development.

- Finally the exploration of new gender relationships in a society is a process which affects and involves everyone. As the explorers will be either men or women, they have no option of being the 'detached observer' of Cartesian rationality, in which the mind is detached from the object it

[109] Insert: Some of these issues can be illustrated, albeit in a different context, by the resilience of such spaces and their capacity to sustain clandestine religious beliefs at times of persecution. This has been described by Diarmaid MacCulloch in 'Silence: A Christian History' Penguin, 2014, especially chapters 6 and 7. MacCulloch also notes the greater participation of women in mystical approaches to faith but remains open as to whether this is a characteristic of female spirituality or a consequence of the complete exclusion of women from the universities in which more intellectual approaches to faith thrived. Similar questions can be posed about women's approaches to midwifery and healing which were also areas in which women had to take a practical lead whilst being excluded from and often persecuted by the formal knowledge processes of all-male elites.

studies. Similarly, the process in which they are engaged does not possess even the possibility of a correct or finite 'solution'. As such, intellectual contributions to the process cannot lay claim to either the objectivity or the replicable proof which underpin positivist science. They need to acknowledge their immersion in the process and admit the contingencies and limitations of their work. In this context, concepts of critical theory, that is approaches which look critically at the process of study as well as its findings, are likely to offer more productive guidance to the assessment of such work and its continuous adaptation to whatever is discovered.

14. All of these features have, at least to some degree, been present in most feminist research over the last forty years, including that related to gender and development. Indeed it is because of the dynamics inherent in what is more a social process than a 'subject' that such research has pioneered these approaches, both philosophically and methodologically. The 'process' detailed above both informs and mirrors the knowledge processes for other forms of paradigm change explored in this book. However, despite the apparent consensus and the considerable funds accorded to it, the impact of development support for gender related work remains limited and incomplete. In relation to changing the paradigm of how gender equality is perceived, it may even be said to have stalled. There may be many reasons for this but two constraints in particular also apply to the types of paradigm change about knowledge which we are exploring in this book.

15. First, development support aimed at creating gender equality faces constant resistance at many levels. Such resistance is not only the inevitable result of challenging existing power relationships but

can also emanate from competing responses to current trends. For example, the breakdown of constraints on individual behaviour historically imposed by social or religious convention can also undermine whatever protection such conventions accorded women. Men can and do act more promiscuously, objectifying sexual interaction and taking less responsibility for their consequences. Thus the reality we are seeking to change does not remain constant whilst we try to change it.

16. More specifically relating to development support, there is the challenge of seeking and justifying funding for profoundly innovative work from large, usually state funded bureaucracies. Here the resistance to change may not be active or even conscious but be embedded in organisational processes set up to manage far more linear and predictable processes. Likewise, the intellectual approaches of such systems, rooted as they are in research on what has already happened, in notions of 'proof' and 'certainty' are more likely to inhibit than support the sort of dynamic, iterative and emergent processes which we have described above. This is perhaps not surprising. It is perhaps unreasonable to expect radicalism and innovation from the offices of governments which are neither radical nor innovative. If so, the onus of those arguing in favour of more effective development support, in gender as in any other area, has to think about what approach to adopt in dealing with such structures. In our view, simply arguing within the system for the 'low hanging fruit' of easy reforms can be counter-productive, It can obscure the complexity of the issues faced and prevent the possibility of at least some shared recognition of what is not known, and what needs to be found out. If it is clearly understood at the outset that what is being attempted needs to be profoundly new and different then at least some space is created for exploring what this might mean for intellectual and operational approaches. In this context clear, and

ideally shared, statements of intent (1.8.11) can also help guide course of action.

17. The second area of constraint is perhaps still more challenging. Work towards greater gender 'equality' cannot escape from the challenges of competing cultural and knowledge legitimacies. If there was a single vision of what gender equality consisted of, there would still need to be a process within each society through which people, especially women, thought through how such a vision related to their life as a whole and to other change processes with which they might be engaged. It cannot be assumed from the outside that they will choose to prioritise one particular struggle over another. Nor can any assumptions be made about the infinite permutations of how one change process interacts with others within a society. They may, as in the case of many of the anti-imperial struggles of the 20th century, be mutually reinforcing. Alternatively, some approaches to gender equality can be perceived as inextricably connected with a modernity which, in its totality if not in all its detail, is experienced as hostile and oppressive. In such a context 'objective' arguments, rooted in modernist approaches and promoted by international organisations accountable only at global levels, may be perceived to lack all legitimacy.[110]

18. But, in any case, there can be no single vision of what gender equality means because, from one culture to another, there is no consensus as to what, philosophically or even cosmologically, being a man or being a woman actually means. Nor are there agreed common procedures for even coming to understand the realities that exist. The anthropologist Frederique Apffel-Marglin has worked in great depth on understandings of womanhood first in Eastern India

[110] Note: Joe Hanlon example of peasants attacking health workers in Northern Mozambique

and then in the Peruvian Amazon for most of the last forty years[111]. In both cases she found cultures in which women (and, differently, men) were accorded a fundamental role in a holistic relationship of the culture with the natural environment, its maintenance and regeneration: an environment on which the human life cycle is fully part. She has contrasted these concepts of life and gender with those dominant in the North which she sees as having been shaped first by the Enlightenment and then by the Industrial Revolution. The former created a concept of thought in which the mind was detached from what it studied. In the process what it studied, be it the human body, nature more generally or society, became objectified. It was shorn of its previously conceived role as an formative part of its environment and instead became an object upon which the reasoner could act. Industrialism took such separation a step further, removing labour from its integration with life and transforming it into a commodity. Henceforth rationality was focussed predominantly on the male world of work whilst, women, despite their significant if subordinate participation in wage labour, were consigned to areas of life, including reproduction, which were deemed less significant. This gendered understanding of reason excluded women through a variety of social means, including their general lack of social status and lack of access to institutions of learning. More fundamentally, however, women are conceptually excluded. The pure reason delivered by the Cartesian separation of observer from the observed is asserted to be superior those other forms of reason rooted in life's

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111 Note: references – Apfell-Marglin, F.Decolonizing Knowledge: from development to dialogue', 'Subversive Spiritualities: How Rituals Enact the World', 'Rhythms of Life: Enacting the World with the Goddesses of Orissa', also reference to E.P.Thompson

experience and, as Apffel-Marglin puts it '*antithetical to the experiences of menstruation, gestation, birth and lactation'* (p.151).

19. Of course, many people, feminists and others, including those who acknowledge the value of Cartesian reasoning in certain contexts, have considerable doubts both about the objectification of nature and the separation of reasoning from the lived experiences about which we need to think. Such doubts have historical and philosophic roots but they also apply to the future. As we will discuss in Part 3, it is unlikely that modes of thinking adapted for the industrial revolution will be that useful for a knowledge and relationship based post-industrial age (3.4.?). Nor do we accept the assertion that one form of reasoning, not by coincidence the reasoning of the more powerful, is inherently superior to other forms. However, as we express our doubts, those of us in North who have been trained to think within this cognitive model have to understand that we are poorly equipped to think outside it. If, as Apffel-Marglin writes '*in traditional farmers practices it is impossible to disentangle the technical, social, religious, aesthetic and other characteristics'* (p.26), the same is also true for us.

20. Thus thinking about gender identity is inextricably and profoundly connected to culture and both relate to how knowledge is defined, constituted and valued. We are convinced that 'Gender and development' has a massive potential not just to overcome the mass of injustices which harm both individuals and the societies of which they are part but to offer a far better life experience for everyone, man or woman. However the challenges such a project faces, even in its early steps, are many and complex. How these are faced is clearly of great importance to the trajectory of gender and development itself. They are also central to our understanding of how knowledge relates to development more broadly.

1.9 Individual Challenges and Organisational Responses

1. We have already remarked on the call, in the WRR Report on Dutch aid, for greater professionalism in development support and on how the report meant this in terms of being experimental and responsive rather than working within externally contrived bureaucratic norms. In our view this parallels other changes in the workplace. Very few jobs in knowledge industries consist of endless repetitions of the same task. Whilst many may still be placed within whatever boundaries an organisation wishes to set, few will be completely defined as to scope and the roles of individuals may be far less standardised than is the case in service or manufacturing industries.

2. This has major implications for what management consists of and for how it is performed. These will be discussed in detail in 2.5. For organisations with social or educational aims, such as developmental support organisations, it also has implications for their culture and structure. No more can they be seen as functionally structured hierarchies in which everyone knows their place. The organogram is, if not dead, then at most a sketch showing where those with most responsibility for and knowledge of key aspects of the organisation may be found. The rest is flexible, with people willing and able to respond to emergent possibilities and prepared to adapt to the tasks at hand. In such a culture, the role of the individual, at any level, is also more pronounced. The flip side of freedom from the externally imposed discipline of old style organisations is more responsibility for individuals not just for prioritising their various tasks and working out how best to fulfill them but also for how the work influences others, inside and outside the organisation, which it touches. The need to 'be developmental',

described above, applies to individuals as well as to organisations. One obvious implication of this imperative is that the means are inextricably part of the ends.

3. Diversity and dissent are essential. If an organisation is to have the capacity to understand the complexity of the challenges with which it engages, it needs access to people with a profound understanding of the many perspectives and knowledgescapes it encounters. Almost by definition, such people will not agree with each other. This does not matter. What does matter is that processes exist that take all perspectives into account, treat them with respect, and, when decisions are taken, leave space for subsequent review.

4. If development support is to re-focus on knowledge of and interest in local realities; relationships with potential agents of change; and management systems open to emergence all within an overall culture of collaboration and of 'being developmental', then there needs to be a profound re-think of what is needed to do the job. In part, this will involve the re-balancing of the work-force of development support. This does not mean the exclusion of ideas and experiences from other sectors but the focus should be on the knowledges, experiences and approaches integral to development as a collaborative cross-boundary exercise. The type of development support which we propose, and the new approaches to the knowledge base, practice and management that it requires, also means that the label 'development worker' needs to cover new skills as well as old.

5. It is not just a question of hard skills. If development support is to be based on relationships, on collaborative engagement, on being developmental then a host of personal qualities such as

humility, empathy, a capacity to listen, a willingness to learn become of ever greater value[112]. The most important are trust and integrity. Trust is essential to the sharing of knowledge and to collaboration. Lack of trust is inherently inefficient as it inhibits the productivity of both those processes and may even lead to deliberate damage.

6. It would be foolish to ignore the fact that many of the open processes we shall explore are open to distortion on the basis of prejudice, self-interest and manipulation. To function well, they depend not just on the diversity of participants, as argued above, but also on their integrity. People have to use such processes for the purposes for which they are designed rather than for personal advantage. Can sufficiently robust processes be put in place to limit such risks, to assess the integrity of participants? One, somewhat archaic definition of a 'profession' is that it represents a calling. Is development work a calling? Fifty years ago few would have questioned the integrity - the intention of working in the best interests of their 'clients', as they saw it - of professionals such as lawyers, doctors, bankers and even priests. That would seem an archaic, even Utopian, view now. That said, many individuals of all such categories - and even development workers - retain reputations for personal integrity. How can such social judgments be recognised, validated and used to guide professional development?[113]

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[112] Insert: These qualities are important in any area of life but they have a particular relevance in development support where people (often young) are working in environments unlike any they have known before with people, whose own life experience and outlook are usually entirely different from their own - Reference to limited literature on experience of development workers. DIP example. Anthropology book. Tina Wallace example, Adrian Adams. Various blogs

[113] Note: It is not impossible to try and assess such competencies. Occupational psychologists have been used to do so for years. More recently, 360 degree appraisal is supposed to elicit the views of a range of people on an individual's working practice rather than just a superior's. NHS England, rocked by recent scandals of 'uncaring' staff are trying to find ways of ensuring and monitoring 'compassion' among its staff.

7. A second aspect of 'being professional' implies having the necessary knowledge and training to carry out a profession. Part of the process of acquiring such knowledge necessarily involves having a belief in it. This then poses a problem for those professions, increasingly doctors and, we would argue, development workers, who no longer see 'being professional' as directing people as to what they should do. Increasingly the practice of medicine is seen as applying specialist knowledge as and when required within the context of a patient led understanding of the whole of their life and the options available to them. This represents a very difficult process as the doctor may have not only to watch a life which they could have extended end, but to accept that this was a valid choice.

8. In the development context, this brings us to the question of ethics and the difference between intrinsic and instrumental values[114]. At one level, the importance of ethics has been recognised and institutionalized by means of devices such as ethics statements in research or project funding proposals. These can function as tick box exercises. As Marilyn Strathern observes, a bureaucratic approach to ethics can encourage an approach which sees project 'beneficiaries' and research 'informants' as objects to whom some harm avoiding duty of care is due. This can actually obstruct a deeper ethical approach which sees all concerned as joint participants in a shared exercise with the requirement for ethical relationships which that implies[115].

9. If we are pursuing a democratic vision of development, people have the right to look at the information and make their own

[114] Insert: Reference to World Bank debates on ethics and on whether they are compatible with the core responsibilities to economic efficiency outlined in its charter.
[115] Note: Marilyn Strathern, 2000, 'Audit Cultures: Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics and the Academy', Routledge

choices. Robin Mansell reviewed the literature on exogenous and endogenous development discourse about the 'information society'.[116] She found that the latter did not really show evidence of looking for and valuing local solutions. It instead represented a belief that endogenous processes – that is a sense of local ownership - would be a better way of leading people to the 'correct' - that is an already internationally identified - solution. Even the work of Paolo Freire[117] , which attempted to create conditions in which people could base their learning around their own perceptions of their needs, has been criticised for making assumptions about what conclusions people would come to once they did so. By contrast, in a different context, the late Padre Mario Fioravanti ruffled feathers in the liberation wing of the Catholic Church in Brazil. The Indigenous Mission Council for the 'Indian' (Native Americans) - CIMI - was, in their own view, the model of modern missionary work, respecting cultural difference and working hard to defend the rights of indigenous people from encroachments of the state, outlaw loggers and ranchers. Respecting this, Mario still pointed out :

> *'The Christian idea still carries an expansionist dynamic, to impose its own religion on others. The Catholic church, even though it is not a fundamentalist church like other groups, still retains some fundamentalist characteristics, which try to impose something already complete, already made on the Indian and which prevents religious dialogue or any harmonious exchange based on the religious experience of each person'*[118]

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[116] Note: R. Mansell, 2010, ' Power and interests in developing knowledge societies: exogenous and endogenous discourses in contention, IKM Working Paper no 11, http://wiki.ikmemergent.net/files/IKM_Working_Paper-11-Robin_Mansell-July2010-final-pdf.pdf (accesses 19/01/2017)

[117] Note: A Brazilian pedagogue, instigator and promoter of many participatory and empowering methodologies and author of the classic 'Pedagogy of the Oppressed', Pelican, 1972

[118] Insert: Interview carried out by Alvaro Tukano with Padre Mario Fioravanti, Rio De Janeiro November 1993. Brief biography

Such an attitude inhibits the possibility of a genuine dialogue and prevents the missionaries from accessing what might be revelatory new knowledge. It also highlights the complexity of maintaining a consistent ethical approach. Are ethics just there to facilitate an end product? Are they a representation of intrinsic values? If so, how can they change or be re-negotiated over time? How are the values of one society interpreted and understood by people from another? We make no claim to have the answers to these questions: in any ultimate sense there may not be any. However, we do believe that both individuals and organisations who deliberately intervene in the lives of others need to have an explicit and defensible set of values to explain, and if necessary debate, the ethical basis on which they do so.

10. Finally, being professional also implies having some role in determining the definition of your profession – what it does, within what limits, according to which rules. Many professions, such as doctors and lawyers, have formal procedures for regulating and disciplining themselves. Development support work cannot, in our view, be seen in exactly the same way as these more formally established professions, but it can share some of the same attributes. One, as already argued, is the need for an explicit set of guiding ethics. Another, in the absence of formal representative bodies, is the agency applied by practitioners in shaping the norms of their 'field'. Fields, according to Bourdieu[119], are the areas in which the arguments about the purpose, norms and constraints of a given human activity are played out by its participants, usually in public,

[119] Note: Bourdieu has produced a prodigious quantity of work. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Field_(Bourdieu) (accessed 31/01/15) offers a brief introduction to the concept. Alternatively, Bourdieu, Pierre (1984). *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*. London: Routledge offers the full works.

and in a dynamic interaction with the broader ideological, social and economic forces which may influence each field. Such external forces may be very powerful but, to become dominant, the changes in the field they wish to influence have to be accepted and used by practitioners within the field. In this process, practitioners have considerable scope, and, we would suggest, duty, to exercise their own professional choice and to argue for the practice they think is most in keeping what they, as professionals working in the field, believe is most effective. Alana Jelinek, commenting on what she sees as the lamentable state of contemporary art practice in London, bemoans the '*unchecked, ill effects of neo-liberal systems and our inadvertent internalisation of its values*' (p.3) [120]. Hannah Beardon and Daniel Guijaro found a similar dynamic in their reflection on the IKM Emergent programme and its work on learning in the development support sector[121]. Writing about a project (How wide are the Ripples), in which they worked with others to examine the use of knowledge developed through participatory engagement with the people the development organisations concerned were trying to support, they observed:

'During the 'Ripples' process we found that many of us internalise the pressure to conform to donor or organisational expectations, even when we feel this is not right for what we're trying to do. Amazingly,

[120] Insert: She goes on to spell out the role of people active in the field for this state of affairs:
'In understanding that the definition of art is subject to social pressures and discourse, we see that although no single person or institution has the power to define art, together and collectively we each contribute to its definition. This is an important idea in that it allows us to understand ourselves as agents, not passively receiving art world beneficence or neglect, but as constituting it. If art now shares neo-liberal values and mechanisms, it is by definition the product of our choices and not something imposed from the outside or a phenomenon over which we have no volition.' p 44

Alana Jelinek, 2013, 'This is not Art: Activism and Other 'Not-Art', I.B.Tauris, London, p 3.

[121] Hannah Beardon and Daniel Guijaro, 2013, 'IKM Emergent: Working with Change' http://wiki.ikmemergent.net/index.php/File:1201-IKM_PBC_draft1.1.pdf accessed 31/1/15

it seemed we rarely even try to negotiate or explain, just assuming the donors prefer us to complete and fulfil a log frame than meet our objectives'. (p.16)

'The 'Ripples' participants reflected on our own roles in the knowledge chain, in making sense and giving meaning to information coming from others, and recognised the need to play that role with integrity and intention, reflecting on our own biases and openly negotiating them with others involved. As such we are agents of organisational learning, for which we need structures and systems which help us to bring our personal changes and learning into our work, and our relationships with the others. But we also have the power to shape and create those structures, within our organisations and in our wider relationships with communities and donors, to fit our context and our needs'.(p 17)

11. In many fields, practitioners do things for reasons which although based on much experience may not be clear to outsiders. If they do not explain their practice, who else will do it for them? It is not always an easy process[122] but without such engagement, any claim to 'specialised knowledge' disappears. In this context, we should perhaps remind ourselves of what 'specialised' or 'expert' knowledge we are talking about. We do not think development support should be characterised as knowing what needs to be done and then doing it. It is about knowing how to work with a range of others to find out what people trying to develop their lives want to be done and supporting them in making it happen.

[122] Note: The last 15 years in the UK have witnessed successive government assaults on health, education and even security systems as successive governments have tried to re-engineer government services as performing markets. In the process the government has sought to portray nurses, teachers, police etc. as self-serving 'vested interests' but with limited success. It should not be, of course, that there can be no consideration of change in these areas – or in development support – or that external perspectives cannot be very useful to such processes. However, deliberately excluding existing and historic knowledge of the work in question, with all its complex dynamics, can be understood either as stupidity or as a malign and deliberate creation of ignorance in order to avoid responsibility for the practical implications of the ensuing changes.

1.10 Challenges of Ignorance

1. We finish this introductory section with a reflection of the various types of ignorance we have encountered and what they mean for the practice we are trying to promote. Apart from malign ignorance which we would wish to challenge wherever we come across it, we do not see ignorance, as long as it is acknowledged, as a problem. It is rather something which challenges us to do things which can be creative, collaborative and enjoyable.

2. Former United States Secretary of Defense, Donald Rumsfeld commented about knowing and not knowing at US Department of Defense News Briefing in February 2002, referring to the lack of evidence that Iraq had supplied weapons of mass destruction to terrorist groups.[123]

'Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns -- the ones we don't know we don't know. And if one looks throughout the history of our country and other free countries, it is the latter category that tend to be the difficult ones'.

Malign Ignorance

3. He was talking about actionable intelligence – or the lack of it – upon which governments take decisions, which is hopefully a different domain from development knowledge. It is, nonetheless an interesting categorization of different types of ignorance. We have

[123]Note: http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=2636 (accessed 1/2/15)

no problem with the concept, in an absolute sense, of unknown unknowns. However, such phenomena also come about through what we term '*malign ignorance'.* Malign ignorance has a number of possible causes. One is the choice which anyone, but especially the powerful, can make to ignore information that they do not like, does not correspond with their prejudices or might be unwelcome to their interests. The decision of the US and UK governments to ignore the very accurate predictions made by President Chirac of the impact of the sudden overthrow of Saddam Hussein on the cohesion of Iraqi society is one example of such behaviour[124], denial of climate science another.

4. A second cause of malign ignorance is a refusal, on the grounds of race, culture, gender, age, status, wealth or any other symbol of power, to accept that what you are being told on the grounds of the assumed inferiority of the teller. Yes, there may be valid grounds for thinking that the (non) listener is generally more knowledgeable than the teller, but this does not mean that nothing the latter says might be correct or innovative. The Macaulay letter quoted above, dismissing Indian science and languages, is one example of such willful ignorance, but, sadly, such attitudes exist in nearly every organisation and at every level[125].

[124] Note: We are kindly assuming here that the stated intention of creating a prosperous and democratic Iraq was indeed the aim, rather than to create a continuous chaos, as some have claimed

[125] Insert: A good example of this in everyday development practice is provided by Patta Scott-Villiers in 'This Research does not Influence Policy', IDS Bulletin 43:5, September 2012pp 25-30. She describes some participatory action research carried out for and by young people in the Karamoja sub-region of Uganda, looking at issues affecting their livelihood. Starting with what seemed like a fairly standard framework of development issues, the research evolved into a discovery and assertion of the strength and resilience of those being researched. This was in stark contrast to the often doom laden reports of government officials and development organisations. Their work, very unusually developed with the idea of the researched being part of the audience for the research, combined a narrative text with many photos. The end product was well received locally but was scorned by member of a bilateral donor organisation on the grounds (almost certainly false) that 'there is nothing in this book that I don't already

5. A third, and linked, cause of malign ignorance comes about when organisations or individuals have behaved in such an appalling way that people who could share valuable knowledge with you, choose not to. Again this is a fairly universal problem but one which is also sadly prevalent in the development support field, often as a result of a failure to acknowledge imbalances of power in relationships[126].

6. The point that can be made about all ignorance, but which is particularly pertinent to the almost willful ignorance conjured up by these malign attitudes, is that it harms everyone in the long run, even those who may think they are being clever by contriving it. It is a major and avoidable cause of taking wrong decisions and doing harm rather than good. It serves to reinforce the importance of good relationships and mutual respect, internally and externally, to effective knowledge sharing and thus, to less unnecessary ignorance. Challenging the foibles of the global elites may be a never ending task. Challenging the inability of organisations within the

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know' and 'when I'm dealing at the policy table I need something that works on a technical and political level'. It would be fascinating to know whether this attitude derives from her own prejudices about what constitutes knowledge, her fearful refusal to engage critically with the norms of her 'field' or any formal policy of her host organisations that, whilst no doubt talking the talk of local 'ownership' requires its staff to ignore certain forms and sources of knowledge. The report itself, written by A. Kizito et al. can be downloaded from http://restlessdevelopment.org/news/2012/01/20/young-people-in-karamoja-uganda-share-their-strength-creativity-and-livelihoods (accessed 1/2/15)

[126] Insert: One fairly extreme example of this came when an international NGO struggling to get supplies to refugee camps along the Sudan-Ethiopia border decided to improve the efficiency of their truck fleet by importing a number of (largely ex-military) drivers and mechanics to direct the operation. These dressed so insensitively to local custom and behaved in such a superior way to the Sudanese drivers, whose efforts they were supposedly there to help, that the latter saw no need to point out that their column had missed the turning to the refugee camps until it got dangerously close to another frontier - that between the Sudanese army and SPLA rebels, some 200 kilometres further South.

development support sector – in their hierarchies, their culture, and their formal procedures - to remove the causes of malign ignorance in their operations should be more straightforward, once, that is, that the problem is recognised.

Plain Ignorance

7. We are all, of course, ignorant of, or forget lots of things, a fact partially balanced by the fact we all know some things too. We also all make mistakes. Not having or misunderstanding some knowledge which could be of direct benefit to us and which is known by somebody else is a universal problem. In organisations, the problem becomes more frustrating, although not necessarily more harmful, when it turns out that the knowledge in question was in common use in a different department or had been written down and archived in a forgotten file. This is not a challenge we write much about in this book except to make the point that all our esoteric flights of fancy come to little if we do not make sure that we do not do the simple and cheap basics of countering plain ignorance – good information management, knowing who to ask for help, being prepared to ask for help – well[127].

Creative Ignorance

8. 'Science' represents a body of knowledge. It also presents an infinite world of ignorance, the desire for a lessening of which motivates most practicing scientists. Usually, but not always, this is performed in a gradual and incremental manner, logically extending the use of previously validated techniques. In our discussions on

[127] Insert: The least successful consultancy of Mike's career was with a regional office of an international organisation which wanted to do something really cutting edge and exciting with the incredible knowledge they thought they had. They took umbrage with suggestions that filing documents, having a filing system, backing up documents and not having most of the organisations knowledge on non-virus protected and easily stolen laptops might be a good first step before anything more ambitious was attempted.

contemporary approaches to knowledge (1.4.14), we asserted that the success of a knowledge industry is not based on knowledge which already exists but on that which the industry is able to create. This may involve the logical development of what has been done before but often it does not. Sometimes neither the product nor the process by which it is created are predictable. In a similar vein, we argued that in a world of complex or 'wicked' problems in which single answer solutions often do not exist, the focus of efforts to produce the best outcome must be on what we do not know as much as on what we do. There are thus a variety of quite different settings, each of which have their own dynamics of knowledge creation, in which 'knowledge work' actually involves engaging with ignorance. This, in our view, is not a problem: it can and should be fun. The challenge, as we see it, is to make the necessary philosophical, organisational and professional adjustments to work effectively in situations of unpredictability, uncertainty, openness, with difficulties of validation and replication. This is a challenge for many people and organisations in many sectors, including the development support sector. Thinking about what these adjustments might consist of, is a major focus of our book.

Transformative Ignorance

9. Finally we return to the quote from Mario Fioravanti (1.9.8) in which he questions whether it is possible to have a genuine dialogue with someone of another belief system if, at the same time, you insist on the correctness of your own. We believe this is a very important point. Mario was referring specifically to the work of a missionary organisation which, by definition, will be happy if others join its faith even if it may often, in recent years, not insist on it. But is development support the same? Are we on a mission to 'convert' people? Do we, despite all the claims to the contrary, still at heart believe that development is a process of other 'catching up' or

becoming more like 'us'? The implications of the answer 'yes' are clear. If so, development is a fraud, an attempted continuation of domination by other methods and those of us who work within it are the foot soldiers on a march of globalization, driven by private profit and committed to rooting out and destroying cultural and ecological diversity in all their forms. Depressing. Saying no is more interesting but also more open. It would involve supporting a process for which, in a way analogous with the desired new relationships between men and women described in 1.7.19, the final destination is unknown. It is an emergent process. It involves other knowledges than our own. To support it, we will need, both individually and institutionally, to make efforts to understand these other knowledges. This in turn requires us not necessarily to unlearn what we think we already know but to recognise the assumptions on which it is based and to learn to think in other ways. In the process, our own lives and our perceptions of them will change, we will transcend the 'ignorance' imposed by the constraints of our own culture. We too will be 'developing'.

10. Knowledge and ignorance are of great importance in themselves. They obviously affect what is done and whether what is done is effective. But attitudes to knowledge and ignorance also have a big impact on the relationships which form the foundation of any collective endeavor. They relate to working in a 'developmental way', to humility and openness to learning from others. Acknowledging a shared ignorance may not remove hierarchies entirely but it offers a considerably more equitable field of engagement in which to collaborate. If the spectre of the all-knowing 'expert' is banished, then everyone can contribute and whilst the contributions of those with the more relevant experience or training may usually be the most valuable, this is not always the case. We share an ignorance of the solution: we strive to find one together.

11. If we accept limits to what we can know, do we have a capacity to be in a state of 'unknowing'? Earlier (1.4.19) we discussed how being able to know was central to our capacity to be. Damascius, the last chair holder in the Athenian Academy, founded by Plato in 387 BCE and closed in 529 CE, might not have agreed. He spoke not of *'the unknowable'* but of realities that are beyond our capacity to know, that is where limits of knowledge are in us rather than in what we are not understanding. He did appear not see it as a problem. Instead, he coined the term 'hyperignorance' to describe '*the state of being engulfed by a reality too great to be seized, or parceled up: the flooding of the consciousness by such a reality can only produce this state of unknowingness'*[128]. We make no claim to have attained such a state, but perhaps in the future it may be an emergent property of seeking insight into what we don't know as much as to what we do.

[128] Note: Raoul Mortley, 1986, 'Chapter VII. Damascius and Hyperignorance', From Word to Silence, 2. The Way of Negation, Christian and Greek. Paper 8. http://epublications.bond.au/word_to_silenceII/8 accessed 28/09/2015, page 127