Interim Evaluation Paper
of the
IKMEmergent
Programme

Red Kite Partners Ltd

October 09

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Executive summary

1   This report reviews the activities of the evaluator over the last fifteen months and the evaluative methods he has been using.

2   The programme has a number of substantial achievements, participants are working systematically and creatively, and demonstrate a good ability to plan collectively and iteratively, and deal with problems and make judgements of value.

3   Members of the working groups feel that membership is making a substantial difference to their understanding of the discourse and consequently to their contribution to the institutions which send them. Most feel the less linear way of working is valuable, but this is not a view shared by everybody.

4   There have been a number of significant spin-offs and alliances formed as a result of the work of the programme.

5   At the same time, there are some questions about synergy and coherence both within the working groups and between the working groups and other individual project holders. What kind of a conversation are people being invited into?

6   A research programme like this will inevitably contain many of the issues it seeks to research. The evaluator recommends paying closer attention to, and describing what it is like to try and practice differently.

7   This will involve paying close attention to and exploring difference as a way of becoming clearer about what we mean by what we say.

8   The evaluator cautions that this will also involve acknowledging and trying to work with conflict, as the exploration of difference often poses challenges to power relationships and identity.

9   The evaluator reviews the options for evaluation rehearsed in the last paper to the Steering Committee and invites reflection and guidance. At the same time he urges project holders to be more active in offering accounts of what they are engaged in to other programme participants as a contribution to programme coherence and the thickening of relationships between co-contributors.

10 In the final section the evaluator highlights some of the conceptual differences that he has encountered from three key contributors to the programme as a way of opening this up for discussion.

Interim report from the IKME evaluator

1   Introduction

It is some fifteen months since the evaluator last reported on his activities to the Steering Group, funders and broader IKME community. In the last report he took the opportunity of outlining some of the conceptual problems of evaluating an explicitly emergent project and some of the paradoxes that these are likely to create. In addition, the inception paper offered some brief evaluative observations as a way of provoking discussion. The programme directors had deliberately appointed the evaluator early on so that the programme could shape the evaluation, and conversely the evaluation would shape the programme. The initial paper, then, was a way of joining the discussion which had already begun and of making a contribution to it.

The purpose of this interim evaluator's report is threefold. It is intended as an account of how the evaluator has been spending his time, which has still been a limited engagement with the programme, and will reflect on this interaction with the programme. It will revisit the assumptions set out last time about evaluation methods and how they might be taken forward as a means of planning the next period and agreeing key areas of work and timeframes. And it will offer some further thoughts about the evaluator's experience of the programme so far, both conceptual and practical.

2   The focus of the evaluation so far

Methods

Since writing the inception paper the evaluator has attended the annual Steering Committee Meeting and planning meetings of Groups 2 in Brussels and 3 in Maastricht. In addition, the evaluator attended a public meeting which followed on from WG3 in the Hague entitled 'Who owns the truth' which was intended as a way of presenting some of the work of the group to interested NGOs and stakeholders in Holland. In each of these meetings the evaluator was an active participant in the discussions and presented on the evaluation to the public meeting. The evaluator followed up these last two meetings with questionnaires to the WG3 members, and to representatives of NGOs who attended the Hague event to find out their thoughts. Only one member of WG3 responded with answers to the questionnaire as did 9 attendees of the public meeting. Additionally, the evaluator has interviewed three sub-project holders about the progress they are making with their projects, and the two programme directors. The evaluator has blogged some of his findings on *The Process Diary* blog. Informally the evaluator has acted as an academic referee for one of the papers submitted to WG3, has attended a spin-off conference in Cambridge on the problems of emergent research, which arose from ongoing discussions between the programme director and other colleagues outside the programme, and has engaged with other bloggers on the IKME sites. He has conveyed his thoughts and observations episodically but infrequently to the programme directors.

So the principal research methods employed by the evaluator have been participant observation, in a variety of different groups, structured and semi-structured questionnaires to both programme participants and stakeholders, document and web research of programme artefacts, face to face interviews and conversations, and general monitoring of e-mail traffic. In face to face and group settings the evaluator is drawing on phenomenological and hermeneutic methods which take seriously the experience of and reflection on organising together and encourages interpretation and sense-making. The evaluator takes contemporaneous notes. In the course of the programme the evaluator has been a minor presence, but a presence nonetheless, which fulfils the original expectations that he would have both a developmental and an evaluative role.

Findings from the working groups

In all groups of the IKME programme the evaluator has found programme members engaged in discussion and negotiation about what to do and how to do it. The working groups in particular have undertaken continuous planning in the sense of informing each other about what they have done to

date as well as being invited to describe what it is that they would like to do next. Discussion is largely open and consensual, and there is a sense that one round of activity can inform the next round rather than the whole terrain being mapped out in advance, which one might take to be a form of emergent planning. Although the programme consists of a number of projects that were identified in the first phase, this does not constrain the working groups taking a different direction over time, or other projects being identified to supplement or complement some aspect of the project in train. In the working groups programme members appear to be accountable not just to the programme directors, but also to each other to a greater or lesser degree.

Where a project has not developed as planned, such as the summaries project, which in this case was largely because of circumstances beyond the programme's control, there have been efforts in the group to reconfigure and rediscuss what was intended in the project with a view to doing something different next time. Both the relatively long time frame of five years and the available funding make this possible. Additionally, in WG3 when a commissioned project did not reach the expected quality a number of group members were involved in both assessing the product and in the discussion about what they might do about it. In this sense the working groups are undertaking evaluative activity of their own as they negotiate what is and is not of the requisite quality. In addition, working group members are taking into account the social nature of what they are doing and are addressing a significant thread of what the programme purports to be about. In highlighting the idea that knowledge production is also about social relations, programme members cannot then themselves ignore the relationships in which they themselves are part. The knowledge management community is relatively small and critical judgements about what does and does not constitute an acceptable programme output has significant ripple effects in the community. Both acceptance of a product and rejection of a product are judgements which help to define the conceptual underpinnings of IKME.

When asked to reflect upon the role of the working groups and their participation in it, WG3 members were overwhelmingly positive about the importance of networking with colleagues from different organisations who would follow a programme of research in a purposive way. The combination of both academic and practitioner perspectives enabled working group participants to develop to the confidence to pursue their ideas in their different institutions and to have a locus of sense-making outside their respective organisations. This was particularly the case for the Southern member of the working group who was at a crucial juncture in his own academic institution for developing knowledge management initiatives. Other working group members commented on the way that the work had helped to make more coherent what can sometimes be more amorphous thinking in the knowledge management domain. This may be one of the outcomes of the programme, that organisations which send participants to the working groups are thus enabled to make more coherent sense of their own knowledge management initiatives, which is a way of replicating the programme's effects.

WG2 members also considered the nature of the programme group meetings and discussion broadly to have developed their understanding of what it might mean to pay attention to less linear ways of understanding knowledge management project development. However, the participants were not unanimous in their views, with members more familiar with tightly controlled working environments, which are perhaps the norm in IT-related environments, being less certain about the benefits of iterative and interpretive ways of working. Understandably in working environments with a bias towards creating products rather than meaning, there was a degree of anxiety about the ability of the programme to have something to show at the end. However, there was a degree of consensus that both products and methods were valuable results from a research programme of this nature.

Between the working groups and others
While working group members have judged their participation in the working groups to have improved their individual understanding of the conceptual hypothesis of the research programme, and broadly to have influenced the institutions of which they are part, they are less clear about how they relate to the work of other working groups. This observation has been echoed by project holders who are not formally part of a working group, although the working groups have not been deliberately constituted in an exclusive way: for reasons of working group coherence and continuity it

makes sense to have a small group of participants in a working group so that they can develop good working relations. However, it is less easy for those people who have been contracted to undertake something specific to see how what they are doing is connected to what everyone else is doing and to engage in a broader discussion of which they could be part. Where working groups have not met so often, as is the case with WG1, participants have been obliged to make sense of what they are doing primarily amongst the existing networks or organisations from which they come. To a degree this points to both the strengths and the weaknesses of a programme such as this: in being a network of networks and individuals the programme is trying to amplify the work of colleagues who are already engaged with the domain. However, the first and second order nature of the networking activity makes it more difficult to achieve programme coherence.

IKME is a large programme which has commissioned a very diverse set of projects, so achieving synergy is intrinsically difficult. Managing and directing projects so that they working in a timely manner is sufficiently time-consuming in itself, but it is interesting to note the way in which simply keeping abreast of developments and trying to co-ordinate sometimes dampens down opportunities to reflect on what is happening and what participants make of what is happening. As in most organisational life, the drive to achieve things takes precedence over the sense that contributors are making of the things they are achieving. The consequences of this were particularly evident for the evaluator during the public workshop in the Hague in June. A variety of NGOs were invited to the event and the group of invitees comprised both those who were familiar with IKM and those who were new to the subject. The workshop consisted in nine PowerPoint presentations detailing the work of different contributors to WG3, and was accompanied by a short period of reflective discussion in small groups. With such a varied group of invitees it would certainly be very difficult to please all of them. However, a consistent complaint expressed on the returned evaluation forms was that there was insufficient time to make sense of what was being presented and to have more meaningful discussions about what WG3 members understood by what they were doing. Into what kind of discussion were people being invited? The people who attended were overwhelmingly positive about the event they had attended and affirmed the importance of what was being talked about. However, for one reason or another they found it quite difficult to engage with what they heard: for this reason most invitees enjoyed the world café session where they could struggle with others over some quite difficult concepts along with their implications.

Another dynamic which has threatened to disrupt programme coherence is conflict or the potential for conflict. Disagreement, sometimes profound disagreement, has erupted between programme participants both inside and outside working groups in ways which have had significant consequences for the work. In the evaluator's own experience of trying to engage one of the contributors to an IKME blog to encourage him to clarify his argument, he was met with an affronted reply, a reaction which surprised the blogger as much as it did the evaluator, and which has led the blogger to cease all contribution to the blog. This report will go on to explore the importance of conflict below.

3   Reflections on evaluative activities to date

IKME has generated a lot of interest amongst a wide range of institutions and actors who are more or less aware of the importance of knowledge in the development process but who are differentially confident or competent to take forward their interest. In the domain of KM for development programme participants are clearly recognised as being part of something interesting and important, and this has led to wide variety of invitations, approaches and spin-offs which are probably too many to count or even to recognise. Even in more orthodox fora, IKME participants are recognised as having something different to say. The programme appears to be broadly on course in terms of its budgets and plans and already has some significant achievements: the programme has supported the setting up of an African university's first knowledge management course, has been invited to talk with the discipline's leading alternative interlocutors and has produced some stimulating papers and interesting ICT products. The programme has begun to push some boundaries, particularly in its broad interest in new media, visualisation of data and fusion with art and other non-textual ways of knowing.

At the same time, the breadth, variety and flexibility of the programme makes it difficult to co-ordinate and to engage sufficient numbers of people in sufficient conversation about what it is they are doing a sufficient amount of the time, and what they make of what they are doing. One way of understanding this is that a knowledge management programme is having difficulty managing its knowledge. The development of a communication strategy, which is already underway, would be one contribution to overcoming this problem. The danger that this poses to the programme is of not achieving adequate coherence, of not being able to describe the way in which the thinking of key participants has shifted collectively as a result of the research programme. By using the term coherence there is no intention of conveying the idea of a fixed or narrow set of views: rather the evaluator is pointing to the importance of an ongoing process of meaning-making, the words 'ongoing' and 'process' being as important as the meaning-making. Taking part in a research programme implies developing a greater understanding about the area of enquiry, but to take an emergent perspective would imply that there is no linear course between starting and finishing the programme. Instead the process of enquiry is likely to dictate where the programme 'finishes', the means being as important as the ends in question. At the heart of the idea of coherence is a tight knot of conceptual difficulties which might be worth trying to loosen slightly as a way of discovering ways forward.

On the importance of exploring difficulties

Firstly, the evaluator acknowledges the understandable reluctance to leap to conclusions about activities taking place in a five year programme when it is only half way through. The temptation might be to 'see what emerges' and to concentrate on making retrospective sense of programme output towards the end or after the programme has finished. The risk of adopting this approach is potentially to miss out on the possibility of further amplifying whatever it is that is emerging, of exploring the difference that this programme could make as it is making it. The evaluator is making a similar point to that of the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, who described what he termed reflexive research methods in the following terms:

> A research presentation is in every respect the opposite of an exhibition, of a show in which you seek to show off and to impress others...The more you expose yourself, the greater your chances of benefitting from the discussion and the more constructive and goodwilled, I am sure, the criticisms and advice you will receive. (1992: 219)[1]

He makes the case that it is the piecemeal, imperfect rendering of incomplete research to a community of other committed enquirers interested in the same topic that allows for the leavening of ideas through the discipline of the group. Only in this way, Bourdieu argued, is it possible to fuse sometimes highly abstract ideas with their very practical implications. Conceptual thinking arises out of a world of practice, and the study of that practice ought also to include the difficulties of both studying and practising, the false starts, the imperfections and half-worked out theories. This is why he states that there is nothing so universal or so universalizable as difficulties (op. cit.: 218).

Programme members' ability to articulate the difficulties of working differently would be a highly generalisable outcome of the IKME programme, and this is why it is important to spend reflective time taking this area of work seriously. The ability to talk openly about the difficulty of organising discrete projects, and the programme as whole, is likely to have broad resonance with some stakeholders who are interested in the programme. Everyone realises that things are not as easy as they might sound. However, as a focus on method it will also encounter its own challenges with other stakeholders: there is still a very strong expectation among project funders, and other stakeholders such as some amongst the Hague invitees, that somehow they can go away with a finished product, a tool, which they can take up without the struggle of engaging with the issues. This was demonstrated during the Cambridge workshop with an appeal for the programme to develop outcomes which are 'useful' to the donors. Without some degree of engagement and struggle, of joint knowledge production to borrow from the thinking in the programme, over what different parties might find to be useful, it will ultimately be difficult to demonstrate usefulness. In the current development

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[1] Bourdieu, P. and Wacquant, J. (1992) *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

environment where there is a high premium placed on 'success', which in the dominant paradigm is equated with the ability to do exactly what you predicted, there is a very strong dynamic to cover over difficulty, the unexpected and the unwanted. In the evaluator's experience of working with development organisations this can produce extreme anxiety and defensive behaviour. Anxiety that leads to researchers always trying to present themselves to the good potentially covers over the amplification of small variations arising from the problematics of programming that can lead to genuine novelty arising and insights that might be useful for others.

On the importance of acknowledging and working with conflict

Another generalisable difficulty already alluded to above is the inevitability of conflict in the exploration of difference. It would be an unwise course to take up a narrow intellectual position and to imply, either directly or indirectly that anyone joining the programme would need to subscribe to it. But a programme that purports to support the concept of 'many knowledges' will itself attract participants with many interpretations of what that term might mean and the different consequences that will arise from working out these interpretations. The acceptance of the basic proposition is quite a low entry requirement, and the collective agreement to work with 'many knowledges' covers over wide variety, which is explored in the last section of this report. The exploration of this difference between engaged participants has already led to some programme difficulties because of the challenge to relationships of power and the threats to identity that this implies.

Programme participants are obliged to take part in a paradoxical undertaking if they are to make a contribution to knowledge that would be 'useful' to their stakeholders. On the one hand they need to progress beyond the straightforward proposition that it is important to acknowledge many knowledges. This was a workable proposition in the initial stages of the programme but is now beginning to look underdeveloped. To develop further it will require a much more careful exploration of what we mean by what we say. On the other hand, to do so would mean trying not to collapse the exploration of views into one position. Maintaining and exploring the paradox would mean accepting the challenge of working through the inevitable consequences of conflict over difference. For those who counter that conflict is merely a difficulty that arises between different personalities rather than being endemic to the knowledge debate, one would point to the thesis that the programme itself has put forward in its seminal articles (Powell, 2006), that the imposition of one way of knowing is a form of domination which covers over local knowledge and in one way or another needs subverting. To privilege indigenous ways of knowing means undermining others, and so altering the relationship of power, which one expect would be resisted. It is this resistance that we experience as conflict of one kind or another. Particular ways of knowing and challenges to those ways of knowing do not just take place between the programme and the outside world, but within the programme itself. Fluency and greater confidence in uncovering and exploring conflict in the knowledge domain could prove very helpful to others wishing to tread a similar path.

Conclusions from this section

IKME appears to be a thriving programme with a lot of activities which have secured the participation of a broad range of significant actors. As programme it seems to be gaining substantial recognition. At the same time the programme's strength, being to a degree a network of activists, organisations and other networks, is also potentially its weakness. The diversity potentially works against the coherent development of the programme unless participants can find ways of continuously discussing what it is they are doing and deepening their mutual understanding. It is the evaluator's recommendation that they should do this in the here and now, rather than delaying too much meaning-making to the end of the project. The reason for doing so is to work with one of the insights of emergence, that the future emerges from the practice of the past contained in the present. Continuous and systematic collective sense-making of what the activities in the project might mean for those engaged in it will significantly affect the shape of whatever emerges at the rather arbitrary cut-off point that we call the end of the programme. It will also influence those trying to engage with the programme now and in the future. The coherence of the conversation will affect the ability of outsiders to join in. If knowledge is as much about practice as products, neither something held in the head, nor a commodity, what is the practice that we are exploring and how does it make a difference?

4   The evaluation over the next period

In the first evaluation paper the evaluator set out six methods that he would employ. These were:

1   Drawing together other evaluations already being undertaken by programme projects.
2   Encouraging reflection and reflexivity in working groups and amongst programme participants.
3   Engaging Southern evaluators for activities taking place in the South to gauge, amongst other things, their relevance to Southern audiences.
4   Developing schematic maps and chronologies of how the programme has developed.
5   Attempt some kind of cost/benefit analysis or explain why this is not possible.
6   Exposing the evaluator' methods, observations and reports to programme participants to promote the same kind of reflection and reflexivity that he is encouraging from everyone else.

1   As already noted above, programme participants are already engaged in continuous evaluative work in order to progress the programme, if we understand evaluation to mean making judgements of value. This involves discussions about quality which oblige the exploration of evaluative choices with others, which is not always recognised or shared by those undertaking it as evaluation. The evaluator made the point in the initial paper that there is so much activity, and much that is taking place in the South, that it would be impossible for the evaluator to cover all the bases: it can only be mostly an evaluation of evaluations. In order for this to happen it will require project contractors more openly to give accounts of what it is they are engaged in. Some are already doing this – for example the blog ChilliMango has given a detailed account and examples of the kinds of work that have been developed and who has become involved. With other projects it has proved more difficult to find out what is going on, and to encourage those responsible to open up what they are doing, not just to the evaluator, but more importantly, to others.

During the next phase the evaluator will encourage as many programme participants as possible to find ways of giving an account of what they are doing in whatever ways they find it most useful to do so (new media, interviews with the evaluator, responses to questionnaires etc etc). This will have a twofold impact providing data both for the evaluator and for other programme members better to understand what it is they are part of.

2   The evaluator is both of the programme and detached from the programme at the same time. This has the potential for continuing to work with the insights of participant observation to encourage meaning-making amongst working group members and others. Programme members are in a better position than the evaluator to judge the usefulness of this as method so far, and perhaps the Steering Group Meeting in Amsterdam would be a good place to review how helpful this approach is for the programme.

3   The evaluator has already started discussions with Michael David about the possibility of engaging a Southern evaluator to evaluate the digital story-telling project tin Sri Lanka. The forthcoming conference in Namibia might also be an opportunity for engaging an observer for the conference to join discussions and follow up on outcomes. Otherwise the evaluator is open to suggestions from others, which might include a Southern perspective on, say IKMVines, which is one of the most expensive projects in the programme.

4   It remains open to debate as to whether this idea is still relevant or whether it would be better to develop retrospectively an account of how the programme developed drawing on products like The Process Diary, programme manager accounts, and the evaluator's recollections.

5   To date the evaluator has had little contact with the donor, the Steering Group, the host organisation EADI and with what might be considered parallel programmes, if there are any. During the next phase the evaluator might research each of these to explore their views on the development of the programme to perhaps develop some broad views on benefits and costs.

6   The evaluator will continue to communicate on his findings as and when appropriate and to encourage discussion about evaluation as much as any other aspect of the programme.

It would be helpful for the Steering Group to discuss any or all of the above threads of the evaluation and to set out their views on when they would like to receive an evaluation document. The nature and shape of the evaluation will no doubt need to satisfy the donor and other stakeholders.

5   Concluding thoughts on IKME and the nature of the evaluation to date

This paper has set out the work that the evaluator has been engaged in to date and has drawn attention to some of the broader trends that appear to him to be emerging in the programme. The programme can already point to a number of significant achievements in the first half of its development, and is gathering momentum and credibility. At the same time the evaluator has noticed some broader trends arising from the nature and shape of the research programme which has made the management of the programme's own knowledge creation problematic. It may be proving difficult to achieve synergy and coherence. The research programme's basic proposition, that it is important to work with many knowledges, may not be sufficiently developed at this half way stage of the project to be helpful enough. This paper puts forward a couple of ideas for ways of progressing this, by paying attention to the discussion of method and the difficulties that arise in trying to practice differently, and in recognising and working with the inevitable conflict that will arise in the exploration of difference.

As part of the evaluator's contribution to the latter, he has sketched out below three significant contributions to the programme's conceptual underpinning by different programme participants. This has only been done schematically, which will undoubtedly cover over as much as it explains, and there are of course far more points of view than these also shaping thinking. However, it is offered as a starting point to show how the programme comprises many different views of the same area of enquiry which would be a good starting point for thinking about how programme members agree and disagree. In order to put together the schematic the author has taken some material from three contributors to the programme to assess different axes of the knowledge discourse: the theory of knowledge in use; the position on development; their emphasis or otherwise on the relationship between knowledge and power, and their preferred 'solution' to the many knowledges question.

1   What might be termed the inception paper by **Mike Powell** (2006)[2] made a plea for the recognition of many knowledge centres and the importance of language and power relationships to the way people make sense of the world. Powell agrees with Walsham (2001)[3] that knowledge is probably inseparable from the social relations in which it is produced. He argues that both conceptions and uses of knowledge are profoundly contested and is disappointed in the narrowness and inappropriateness of most knowledge instruments in the development domain. Drawing on Cabral (1980)[4], Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1993)[5] and Hamelink (2003)[6] amongst others, Powell does not argue for a relativistic, 'anything goes' understanding, and is not anti-Western or anti-science as such, but argues rather for greater power for local people to decide what knowledge is relevant to the context in which they find themselves. The article is informed by emancipatory development thinking, which is ultimately utopian in the sense that it imagines a state where people could contribute to a universal knowledge once they were fully free, but in the interim adopts what might be termed a post-foundational or pragmatic approach. It is not that all truths are necessarily equal, but absolute objectivity and absolute truth are impossible to achieve. Powell imagines development organisations

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[2] Powell, M. (2006) Which knowledge? Whose reality? An overview of knowledge used in the development sector, *Development in Practice*, Volume 16, Number 6: 518-532.

[3] Walsham, G. (2001) 'Knowledge management: the benefits and limitations of computer systems', European Management Journal 19(6): 599–608.

[4] Cabral, A. (1980, original pubn 1970) 'National Liberation and Culture', in Unity and Struggle: Speeches and Writings, London: Heinemann Educational Books.

[5] Ngugi Wa Thiong'o (1993) Moving the Centre: the Struggle for Cultural Freedoms, London: James Currey.

[6] Hamelink, C.J. (2003) Human Rights for the Information Society in B. Girard and O ´. Siochru´ (eds.), Communicating in the Information Society, Geneva: UNRISD.

adopting an approach to knowledge which allows for overlapping knowledges using multiple languages, as well as greater acknowledgement of Southern intellectuals' perspective on their condition.

Summary: social theory of knowledge, privileges the idea of Southern actors making their own best evaluative judgements about knowledge, emancipatory and ultimately utopian theory of development taking account of power and language, calls for overlapping knowledges.

2   **ODI** 's research papers are mostly oriented to Northern agencies to help them improve practice. As a research institution their researchers take a detached view of a variety of different positions, often closing on none. As an example we might take *The State-of-the-art literature review on the Link between Knowledge and Policy in development* (2009). The paper reviews different definitions of knowledge and although not prescriptive nonetheless comes down on the side of the individual 'knower'. Nonetheless, it argues that power relations significantly affect policy production, although this is understood ain reified terms, power 'affecting' policy. The paper laments the lack of representation of the voices of the poor in the policy-making process. Although the paper argues that getting the right knowledge to influence policymaking processes is more of an art than a science, involving judgement, it argues that there could be longer term sustainable 'solutions'. ODI encourages further research to discover models to redress the current imbalance, and clear analytical categories.

Summary: individual or abstract theory of knowledge, pro-South to improve Northern policy-making, development seen as improvement of instruments and theoretical models, problem/solution oriented: broadly within the scientific paradigm.

3   In her book *Leonardo's Vision* (2008)[7], **Valerie Brown** calls for 'future-oriented collective thinking', a synoptic way of working which overcomes social divisions, where Leonardo da Vinci is taken to be a paradigm of such thinking ('*The part always has a tendency to unite with it's whole in order to escape from its own imperfection')*. The book argues that social conflict can be overcome by reuniting the parts and the whole, and as such is a manifestation of systems theory. Drawing on analogies with pattern languages the book suggests that there is an intrinsic hidden order in the world which needs rediscovering so that we can move from an imperfect present to a perfect future understood as a whole. Brown understands knowledge to correspond to nested systems which can be brought together in a multi-faceted synthesis and sets out a number of exercises in her book which call for the development of visions of the future based on consensus, harmony and balance. Power is experienced in opposition to these ideas. In her presentations, Valerie Brown offers a critique of the 'Western knowledge system' (equated with science?) and the way it has caused the fragmentation of parts and the whole, even though systems thinking, the method that she espouses, is also an instrument of scientific method.

Summary: holistic theory of knowledge, indigenous knowledge valorised, Western knowledge criticised, utopian and metaphysical theory of development with no explicit theory of power.

These three brief summaries are unlikely to do justice to the conceptual position of the three programme participants, but nonetheless even in reduced form do show significant differences of understanding and approach. What do programme participants make of these differences and how might they be explored?

In discussing the next phase of the evaluation the evaluator reviewed the assumptions and methods discussed in the last paper and pointed to the importance of project holders contributing more about what they are doing to programme public spaces. This could make better sense of the evaluative judgements they are already making in their work. It will also serve to thicken the connections between programme participants and thus contribute to programme coherence. The evaluator is inviting the views of the Steering Committee to help shape the evaluation for the next and final phase.

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[7] Brown, V. (2008) *Leonardo's Vision: a Guide to Collective Thinking and Action*, Rotterdam: Sense Publishers.

In the final section the evaluator has offered his own synopsis of some of the different thinking that is informing the conceptual underpinnings of the programme as a way of opening up the discussion about difference.

Chris Mowles October 09