EMERGENT ISSUES IN INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT AND INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

A schema outlining an integrated, interdisciplinary, inclusive research programme

European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes

Mike Powell
m.powell@pop3.poptel.org.uk
April 2007

Contents

Background

At the 2005 Tri-annual Conference of the European Association for Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI), Simon Maxwell of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) challenged the EADI Working Groups to take up the challenge of research for development in the interest of joined up thinking and effective development practice. Paul Engels of the European Centre for Development Policy Management talked of the danger of the development sector gaining its information from only a small part of the world as a challenge for information managers. Members of the Information Management Working Group, always active and innovative since its inception in 1975, have, with other colleagues, taken up this challenge. Working with Mike Powell, an independent consultant and author of a key book in the field 'Information Management for Development Organisations', a group of practitioners and researchers have combined forces to produce this five year programme for an integrated programme focusing on information and knowledge management within development organisations. The programme is being funded by DGIS, of the Royal Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

This document outlines how it is intended to organise the activities of the programme through three working groups with communications and programme development as cross-cutting processes. The rationale for the programme and the analysis on which it is based have been developed elsewhere[1]. Part II reviews the context to the programme, namely information and knowledge management in development. Next, the structure of the programme is outlined. Part IV looks at the proposed aims and activities, starting with the overall programme and the communications strategy and then describing the planned activities of the three working groups: (1) Exploring discourses; (2) Making the most of information; and (3) Management of Knowledge. For each working group, an overview is provided of the planned activities in terms of: objectives; participants; core group; rationale/scope; work plan; outline schedule; planned outputs; interaction and dissemination; and desired outcomes.

---

[1] See Powell, M, 2006, 'Which knowledge? Whose reality? An overview of knowledge used in the development sector', Development in Practice Journal 16:6

PART 2: PROGRAMME CONTEXT

The overall argument on which the programme is based is that, seen as a whole, the development sector applies too limited a range of knowledge to its activities. In particular, it lacks sufficient knowledge of the local realities it aims to change and of the perceptions of those realities held by local stakeholders. The programme aims to improve this situation by:

- raising awareness of the strategic relevance, potential contribution and contested nature of knowledge to development work;
- creating new channels and an environment for innovation, supported by research on existing and emerging practice, for people working in the development sector to raise and discuss means of addressing this issue; and
- finding, creating, testing and documenting ideas for processes and tools which, in addition to their intrinsic value, will illustrate the range of issues which affect how knowledge is used in development work and stimulate thought around possible solutions.

Previous work in this area has been piecemeal with the result that research about links between research, knowledge and management have often had limited audiences and little impact on practice. Innovative features of this programme are that:

- it will actively seek to engage development researchers, policymakers, activists and practitioners in the issues of the knowledge they need to do their work and that they produce themselves rather than focus only on those managing information and knowledge flows;
- it will identify underused potential sources of development knowledge and suggest ways these can be unlocked and made available to those that can benefit from them; and
- it will link simultaneous enquiry into a range of knowledge related issues in conjunction with a communications strategy which will ensure the maximum awareness and discussion of the programme's outputs.

The range of issues relevant to the selection, expression and use of knowledge in the development sector is extremely broad. The programme will reflect this breadth. It will do so with the intention of illustrating this range and providing good examples of the interaction of its various aspects rather than of providing definitive answers to specific questions. This is consistent with the programme aim of creating an environment for innovation and change in which people are encouraged and supported to develop their own analysis and solutions of the knowledge issues relevant to their own priorities.

The application of knowledge to development policy and practice, like this programme itself, does not take place in a vacuum but in a context of what can be termed 'informational developments'[2] – that is the connected series of information related changes to social, economic, and cultural as well as technological life. The programme is based on an analysis of these changes globally, which observes no single process or uniform destination to them but a variety of new processes each influencing and being influenced by the society in which they are taking place. The programme intends to explore the implications of these emerging differences in informational developments for development work across geographic, cultural and linguistic boundaries.

---

[2] See 'Understanding Informational Developments: a reflection on key research issues', UNRISD Conference Report, September 2003

PART 3: PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

Working Groups

The programme is based on an holistic approach to its subject. It sees a need to combine attention to three aspects of the use of knowledge within the development sector, which are usually viewed and managed separately. Its work will be developed through three working groups, each leading an interactive and iterative learning process on one of three core issues:

- Exploring discourses - the creation, content and status of knowledge
- Making the Most of Information - the tools and processes through which content is formed and handled
- Management of knowledge – the organisational contexts in which it is managed, discussed, exchanged and used

Each group will follow a broadly similar pattern of work to:

- Assess the current state of knowledge and practice in its area
- Identify issues of strategic importance
- Plan work which will improve the state of knowledge and offer ideas for future practice
- Consider how its work links with that of the other groups
- Interact with other people in the sector North and South working on similar issues and with end users of the processes being investigated

Outline schema for each group are presented below. The first, exploring discourses, will take a profound look at the strategic issues concerning the knowledge base upon which development decisions are taken. The practical implications of the work of that group are likely to add new conceptual challenges to the already urgent problems of improving the flows of information in the sector, which the other working groups aim to address. The first two groups fill real gaps in the current field of development related IKM research, the latter will build on and give fresh impetus to collaborations which have existed in the recent past.

Each group, supported by a budget for the co-ordination of its activities and for a level of interaction with the other groups, will build or reinforce networks of researchers and practitioners to engage actively with the issues in question. There will be some cross membership of different groups and of individual groups and the steering group. Each group will have available a set of web based information and communication tools with which to build this planned interaction.

Each working group will develop its plans with the co-ordinator and the steering group. As much freedom as possible will be left within the overall framework and within agreed budgets to allow each group to plan the detail of its ongoing work in a way which takes into account its iterative and interactive nature. The aim at the outset is to create an intellectual framework, a clear sense of direction, broad outlines of expenditure and a clear management and decision making structure to support such a process.

Steering group

The following figures have agreed to act as a steering group. They represent a balanced range of the experience and expertise covered by the programme

- *Cees Hamelink*, (Chair) Professor of Communications and Human Rights, University of Amsterdam
- *Mare Fort*, Senior Advisor Knowledge Sharing, CARE USA.
- *Thomas Lawo*, Executive Secretary, EADI

– *Robin Mansell* , Professor of New Media and the Internet, Department of Media and Communications, and President of IAMCR – the International Association for Media and Communications Research
– *Bridget McBean*, co-convenor of the EADI Information Management Working Group and Senior Communications and Information Specialist, European Centre for Development Policy Management.
– *Kingo Mchombu*, Professor of Information and Communication Studies, University of Namibia
– *Loe Schout*, Head of Bureau, Culture, ICT and Media, Hivos
– *Wangui wa Goro*, an academic social critic, researcher, translator and writer and a campaigner for human rights in Africa and Europe

This group will meet once a year but will interact virtually at other times. Individual members will be welcome to participate in the working groups - and will have highly relevant expertise to offer – but it is expected that some will retain their independence of the work of the programme and limit their involvement to the steering group. The steering group will

- Offer overall intellectual guidance and challenge to IKM Emergent
- Assist in peer review and quality control
- Contribute to the impact of the programme through the value of their association with it and the dissemination of relevant material through their own personal and professional networks
- Approve, reject or qualify the co-ordinator's annual report
- Approve the annual plan
- Intervene in or re-organise the management arrangements of the programme if necessary

Co-ordination/ Secretariat
The programme has an overall co-ordinator, Mike Powell, who is also responsible for its daily management and for its continuing development. This will involve responding to the challenges identified by initial programme outputs; developing links and partnerships with others working in the same area; and promoting thinking and communication by youth about the issues the programme raises.

A communications co-ordinator, Sarah Cummings, with develop a communications strategy which will aim to develop channels for working directly with development organisations on the practical implications of the programme's work; building and interacting with relevant networks; disseminating the programme's output; and creating a rich information environment in which its stakeholders can work.

The programme was formally submitted to the Royal Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs by EADI (European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes) with the support of its Information Management Working Group (a thematic group of EADI members). Legal and administrative responsibilities for the programme rest with EADI's secretariat.

The aim will be to work in a transparent way with stakeholders alerted to of all decisions affecting them and with access to any relevant documents.
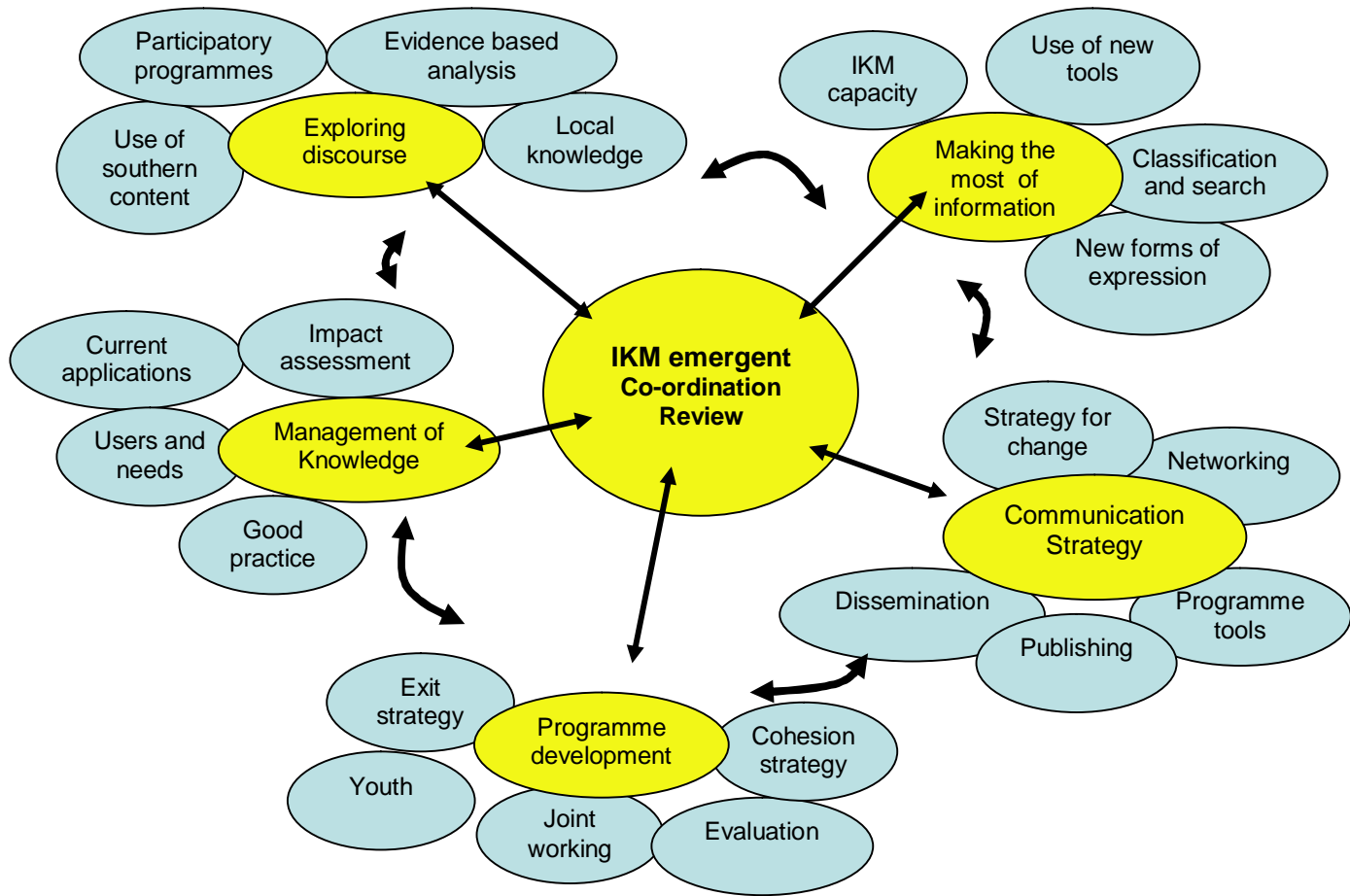
Figure 1 IKM Emergent Overview

PART 4: PROGRAMME AIMS AND ACTIVITIES

Overall Programme

Goals

To improve development practice by promoting change in the way development sector actors approach the selection, management and use of knowledge in the formation and implementation of their policies and programmes.

To create an environment for innovation and change in the approach of the sector to its sourcing, management and use of knowledge

To promote an understanding of the importance of multiple perspectives and interpretations of knowledge to effective development work

Desired outcomes
- Active engagement of development researchers, policymakers, activists and practitioners in the issues of the knowledge they need to do their work and that they produce themselves
- Greater understanding of the links between management of a range of relevant knowledges and core development processes , with particular attention to the range of Southern knowledge production and how it can be used to improve development policy and practice
- Development and use of new methodologies leading to improved capacity to handle information from multiple sources and to apply in their work and in their communication with diverse audiences in ways which support rather than block dialogue
- An interactive information and communications strategy supports the engagement and networking capacity of programme participants, to ensure the dissemination of programme outputs, and to identify and influence potential agents of change across the sector
- Relationships and structures are created to ensure learning from and cohesion in the programme, its continuous development in relation to other opportunities within the sector, and sustainable interest in the issues it raises

Intended Beneficiaries
- Senior managers and policy makers – by demonstrating the strategic importance of IKM in particular to their interaction with partners in the South, providing critical analysis of current practice and practically oriented suggestions as to how current practice may be improved
- Information managers and individual workers concerned with IKM as it relates to their own roles - through providing research, tools and collective mechanisms for interactive creativity and learning with which to improve their own practice
- Activists and intellectuals based in the South - through advocacy of investment in and use of Southern production and articulation of knowledge and through research and dissemination on good practice as to how this may be achieved

COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

An effective communications strategy will be central to programme's aims of raising awareness and promoting discussion of the issues it addresses; stimulating a networked environment for change; and ensuring an optimum dissemination of its outputs. This strategy will be developed and then, in partnership with other stakeholders, implemented by the programme's communications specialist. The key elements of this work will be:

- Identifying the multiple audiences at which the programme is aimed and developing for each specific plans through which to engage people in appropriate ways in the work of the programme, to ensure awareness of its outputs and to stimulate debate on the issues it raises.

- Linked to the above, identify key people, networks, conferences, workshops and debates both within individual development organisations and across the sector as a whole with a view to promoting discussion of the issues raised by the programme and related organisational change.

- Assisting the co-ordinator and the individual working groups in the development or support and servicing of sustainable networks around the main themes of the programme.

- Advising the co-ordinator, review body and working groups of conferences/ workshops they may be welcome to attend and on the planning of and communication of the outcomes of workshops and conferences organised by the programme.

- Creating, maintaining and encouraging the use of a rich information environment with database, web, wiki, blog, RSS feed, e-mail and audio-visual tools, for the use of the review body, the individual working groups and the programme and its networks as a whole. This may be provided internally or be contracted out to a specialist agency within the development sector with the aim of supporting the sustainable development of such tools for the sector as a whole.

- Planning and ensuring the production of an historical record of the programme's work through a range of outputs – a book series, web sites, articles, summaries, audio-visual outputs, software and evaluations of pilot projects – in order to make a coherent and lasting contribution to the literature on connections between knowledge and development.

- Generating wider interest and debate on the issues raised through work, ideally involving interaction with audiences, with print and radio journalists specialising in development issues North and South.

This work will start with a communications strategy workshop involving a group with extensive experience of leading or advocating change process within development organisations which will aim of developing our understanding of how changes in the working practices and in-house attitudes of development agencies come about with the aim of using that understanding to shape the communications strategy of the programme

Working Group 1 - Exploring discourses

This working group represents a unique initiative to consider as a whole the multiple strands – formal and informal - of Southern knowledge production on development related issues and their interaction with development discourse in both North and South. It is hoped that this holistic approach, based on detailed evidence of individual aspects of the subject, will provide a new awareness of gaps in current development knowledge practice. Working Group 1 also aims to encourage greater investment in the production and use of Southern knowledge based on an improved understanding of appropriate methodologies for such work which it will research and document.

Participants
There is a particular interest in engaging with individuals who have both some intellectual background and direct experience of participation in or work supporting local knowledge processes. Participants will include:

- Intellectuals interested in this field, especially those with a Southern perspective;
- People/organisations who have worked on or studied participatory approaches; and
- People/organisations who have worked on grass roots dialogue/communication issues

Core group
Dan Baron works on cultural literacy projects primarily with parts of the landless movement in Brazil and is involved on the implications of this work for pedagogic policies.
Kemly Camacho is engaged with a researchers' co-operative in Costa Rica which focuses on local knowledge systems and is also a programme manager for the Bellanet Secretariat (an information and knowledge for development partnership).
Michael David was previously director of the Kotmale community radio project in Sri Lanka and a sociologist at the University of Colombo. Is currently works for the BBC World Service Trust
Bridget McBean is senior Communications and Information specialist ECDPM and co-ordinator of EADI Information Management Working Group
Mike Powell, Programme co-ordinator.
Wangui Wa Goro an academic social critic, researcher, translator and writer and a campaigner for human rights in Africa and Europe

Rationale/Scope
Any area of work which aims to enable profound changes to people's lives through collaborative work across cultures, languages and technical disciplines, needs to reflect continuously on how perceptions of reality and concepts of knowledge differ and the implications of such difference on what is achieved.

Development work also has a particular need, given its dependence on how intended participants respond to initiatives, for adequate knowledge of the realities it seeks to change. For such knowledge to be adequate, it must include an understanding of the perceptions and knowledge being applied locally, by participants in the development project and others around them. This in turn depends on effective use of all available sources of relevant evidence. Failure can mean that managers are taking decisions on incomplete or inaccurate information and that populations are either unaware of or not in agreement with processes with which they are expected to engage.

There is widespread evidence that current practice is not satisfactory. As Paul Engel[i] said in his address to the EADI Information Management Working Group in Bonn in 2005, *'we are weaker if we do not have full information'* and *'we are taking our information from just a small part of the world'*. This

assertion is supported by a number of studies of the availability and use of material by African authors on African development. However, if the aim is to genuinely improve knowledge of differing perceptions and perspectives rather than to tick some box marked 'Southern authorship', a number of issues need to be addressed. These include:

- Agenda setting, which shapes what can be talked about – for example, past efforts to establish research centres in Africa have been financially dependent on donor-driven research restricting their freedom to prioritise their own issues.

- Conceptual constraints, which shape the structure and form of what can be expressed. Local work is expected to present itself according to external norms and is constrained by the narrow definition of existing markets for publications. Thinking on Southern development is 'centred' in the North and, as Kenyan author Ngugi Wa Thiong'o argued with reference to literature, there is a need 'to shift the base from which to view the world from its narrow base in Europe to a multiplicity of centres'. Issues of the 'colonisation of the mind', as explored by Franz Fanon, remain very real.

- Language and means of expression, which shape the extent to which people feel at ease in explaining what they mean.

- Challenges of articulation, which shape the value of what is said – structuring ideas and experience in ways which are understandable to others and lead to constructive discussion is difficult for anyone, let alone communities brutalised by poverty or conflict and lacking access to formal education. There is a need to learn from the experience of the relatively small number of programmes, such as Dialogues Politiques (run by ENDA in Dakar), work on cultural literacy with the Movimento sem Terra in Brazil (Baron and Souza) or the Reflect Programme (Action Aid)[ii] which are active in this area.

- Receptiveness of Northern discourse, which shapes the extent to which such material is used by Northern academics and development organisations. Northern development discourse has often failed to properly inform itself about Southern perceptions of the subject. There is a need for a better understanding of why and how this happens and of what can be done to improve practice.

- Return on effort, perceptions of which shape the time and attention people are prepared to commit to consultation or research exercises, is also an important issue. Lack of meaning to the participants, lack of feedback on how material has been used and repeated 'consultations' on the same or similar issues with no tangible results, can limit people's desire to engage in communications processes.

Most of these issues present in even more acute form, the more excluded, perhaps on grounds of gender, class or poverty, the people seeking to express themselves are.

Overall goal
Development sector actors have a better understanding of the range of Southern knowledge production and how to utilise it to improve development policy and practice

Objectives

1. **Improved understanding of local knowledge processes, their local impact and methodologies for their support and use**

   Autonomous and independent voices (local knowledge processes) articulate their own development agendas independently of those of development agencies and seek to use means of expression and channels of communication with which they are comfortable. Such articulation is potentially a vital source of knowledge for the development sector but support for it is rare and often the handling and use of such information sources sits uncomfortably alongside formal information systems. The initial work of the group will be to deepen the understanding of the potential connections between local knowledge processes and the work of the development sector and to construct an appropriate methodology – one which benefits participants in such processes as well as researchers – to research these connections further. The aim of this research will be to identify good practice in the support of local knowledge processes and to explore and facilitate the potential links between local processes, local development discourse and development knowledge in general

2. **Creation and use of evidence based analysis of the roles played by intermediaries (including diasporas) in development communication and how they can be influenced**

   Intermediaries, information brokers and appreciative systems play a vital role in interpreting and connecting information and needs from different sources. However the sometimes contradictory demands, for example between public relations and learning, between rigid funding strategies and local needs, placed on such mechanisms can distort messages and create false knowledge. In a different context, diasporan communities can provide another set of channels for interpretation and connection. The working group will explore the role of intermediaries of different types and analyse their potential for facilitating the transfer of knowledge in all directions. The work will lead to guidelines explaining what types of intermediary can assist in which type of knowledge transfer using which methodologies

3. **Review of the links between participatory programme work, research and organisational information systems**

   There is limited use of qualitative research carried out by development agencies themselves in the course of their work, notably the outcomes of participative methodologies. Widespread anecdotal evidence suggests that most of such work tends to remain within the ambit of the particular project for which it is carried out. Research will be carried out as to what happens with this materials and ways in which it can be made of use to wider audiences

4. **Overview of barriers and opportunities to use of Southern intellectual output by development sector**

   There are multiple barriers to the free development and use of Southern academic and intellectual output – identification of research questions, research methodologies, opportunities and markets for publication, dissemination and citation. Some work, for example a conference involving CODESRIA and the University of Leiden, is being done on these issues in an academic context. Their implications for development research and knowledge need to be explored.

Activities

- Assessment of past practice and other potential methodologies for investment in local knowledge processes at innovation workshop (year 1), followed by testing of range of methodologies in diverse locations and discussion of outcomes with participants, development actors and donors

- Commissioning of two studies to provide an overview of existing research on the roles of development and diasporic intermediaries (years 1 and 2) , followed by discussion of findings and planning of original research

- Cross organisational study of use of evidence gained through participatory sources ((years 1 and 2), followed by analysis , action research and workshops developing improved methodologies for organisation use of the findings of participatory work

- Commissioning of overviews on the barriers and opportunities to use of local intellectual output by development agencies in Africa, Latin America and South Asia, followed by review and discussion of outcomes with Southern producers, research users, research distributors and donors

Planned outputs

- An international conference to put issue of 're-centring' development knowledge on the map
- Advocacy campaign
- Published research
- CD/DVD of examples of expression studied.

Interaction and dissemination

- Creation of a network on these issues around the working group
- Active meeting programme of working group and network involving workshops and conferences
- Major input to advocacy work of overall programme
- Publishing of outputs in hard and digital copy

---

[i] Paul Engel is director of the European Centre for Development Policy Management

[ii] For ENDA see http://diapol.enda.sn/ and for Reflect, see http://217.206.205.24/Initiatives/ict/home.htm
Baron and de Souza's work is available in Portuguese as Baron,D, 2004, 'Alfabetização Cultural: a luta íntima por uma nova humanidade', Alfarrabio, Sao Paolo, and reviewed in English in Development in Practice, Vol 15:5, August 2005.

WORKING GROUP 2 – MAKING THE MOST OF INFORMATION

This working group aims to focus on how information can be better recorded, handled, described and shaped to maximise its potential role in the construction of knowledge. Although there are some networks of development oriented information management, knowledge management and ICT professionals, the communication between them is patchy. Even less well connected are people working with information within specialist fields. Thus organisations working on health information and on environmental information may have limited opportunities to think of what they have in common with each other or indeed how their efforts might usefully be connected at grass roots levels. The aim is thus to develop a network interested in thinking less how existing technologies can be applied in a development context but what specific issues exist in the finding, handling and use of information in the development sector and working collaboratively to find or create tools and processes which might address them.

The group will base its activities on the following precepts:
- that the process in which it is engaged is social – building interactive channels of communication which participants will find useful for their work – as well as creative, intellectual and technical
- that enabling multiple productive uses of one set of original information rather than duplicating information gathering efforts is a general feature of good practice with which the development sector, given an information environment which crosses disciplines, sectors, culture, language, gender and class, seems to struggle
- that making the most of information is not specifically an issue of ICT or digital media but needs to be applied to all forms of information handling and use

Participants

Network members will include
- Users and producers of development related information both generalists and those working in specialist fields such as health, agriculture, water etc.
- Development related communications people, broadcasters, publishers and web masters
- Artists
- Information management professionals
- Librarians/Resource Centre staff
- ICT managers
- Software developers
- Specialist research centres (including private sector).

Core group

Chris Addison is a consultant on Internet based information services for development organisations, and co-Convenor of EADI Information Management Working Group
Peter Ballantyne has been involved in pioneering work on knowledge and development at ECDPM, IICD, INASP and is now director of Euforic.
Dejan Dincic is the Information Architect at the Diplo Foundation.
Mike Powell, Programme Co-ordinator
Olivier Sagna – we hope

Rationale/scope

Work in the development sector combines difficulty in finding necessary information with a simultaneous experience of information overload. Serious problems exist with the sourcing and handling of information and with the form in which it is made available to users. These include:

- The absence of effective links between researchers and potential users of research in the formulation of research questions and methodologies;

- The inappropriateness of the main information artefacts used to present research – the journal article or the long report. These are often only skimmed through or read for their abstract or executive summary. Studies of policy makers and practitioners show very limited take up of development research, in the form of journal articles, which has been undertaken for the expressed purpose of informing them. Academics show considerable resistance to altering the forms of their research products in order to reach relevant non-academic audiences.

- The inefficient use of qualitative evidence emerging from development programmes. Programme information, in particular planning and evaluation which is based on participatory approaches, can offer a wealth of information about local views and realities. Such information is almost invariably kept within the archives of the programme or project to which it applies. It is seldom examined for its wider relevance or made more generally available as potential evidence for others.

- The haphazard use of informal research, which, whether produced by local communities themselves or by development organisations and consultants, is seldom distributed or publicised in any structured way beyond its original intended audience, even when it is made available.

- The apparent weakness of new markets (or of efforts by publishers to exploit new markets) for cross sector or cross disciplinary intellectual output, in particular that emanating from Southern sources. This restricts the extent to which research findings and new ideas cross sectoral boundaries and limits the opportunities for new voices or ideas to be heard.

- The continuing difficulty of classifying increasing quantities of information in an increasing number of formats in a context where 'everything is miscellaneous' and in ways which enable material to be found easily when relevant but only when relevant.

- The still embryonic nature of web tools and practices which could contribute to the resolution of some of these issues, their continuing development (Web 2) and the often technically led rather than user led process of their development and introduction.

These problems exist in a context whereby users of information, especially through their use of web browsers, e-mail programmes and their own hard disks, are and should be taking greater control of their personal information environment, albeit in an often haphazard manner. Training, not simply in using specific pieces of software, in thinking 'informatically' about the variety of ways they can work with information, and how their own practice links to IKM in the organisation would be as helpful as it is rare. To manage their own environment they also need good supporting infrastructure and information systems. Providers of such support face similar

challenges in every development organisation. However, despite the potential for collaboration in the sector, mechanisms for sharing lessons, knowledge and tools between agencies are very weak.

The task of this working group will be to identify existing problems and opportunities and those that emerge from the work of the other working groups and to consider and evaluate new ways in which information can be recorded, handled and made available to support knowledge in the development sector. It will be concerned with all forms of information artefact, traditional or digital, which could be exploited using tools already common to the sector.

Overall Goal
Development sector actors have improved capacity to handle information from multiple sources and to apply in their work and in their communication with diverse audiences

Objectives
1. **Investigation of new artefacts for expression and their relevance to the development context**
   Assessment of new information artefacts in use/development in other sectors and of their potential relevance to development organisations:
   – Written: for example testing the production of stand alone non-academic summaries of journal articles and their distribution to target audiences through specialist intermediary organisations (initially with *Development in Practice* journal).
   – Visual: for example document the range of visual materials created through participative methodologies in work with local populations and assessing their comprehension and use in organisational information systems.
   – Oral: for example assessment of current initiatives in Africa and South Asia aimed at enabling the creation of oral records in local languages and their implications for information and knowledge systems in development organisations

2. **Development and assessment of classification and searching tools which will enable greater user control in identifying and accessing development related information**
   How can the increasing variety of development related information, information source and information format be better described and classifying to ensure that potentially relevant information is made more accessible without swamping users with too many choices?
   – Assessment of strengths and weaknesses of current practice in relation to user control; meta data - classification/taxonomies/ontologies/ IDML; use and re-use of documents of multiple relevance
   – Testing interactive visual presentation/navigation tools to allow greater user control in creating links between information artefacts and to display the complex structure (architecture) of such links. Piloting 'inhabited information space' in which the choices made by users with regards to searching and linking information can (with their consent) be mapped to create socially created perspectives on what knowledge is used and how.

3. **Investigation of awareness and use of new tools by development actors**
   The work of the group needs to relate to the needs of end-users working in a variety of roles in the developments sector:
   – Research with end-users on their perspectives on the use and impact of knowledge tools and support currently available;

- Assessment of the impact of individual information and knowledge behaviour on the functioning of information and knowledge systems within organisations;
- Continuing interaction with particular groups of end users in relation to programme findings; and
- Development of generic training tools or 'training the trainer' based on the outcome of the above interaction.

In setting a wide agenda, the working group is not intending to initiate original work on every aspect. A significant part of its work will be in identifying work of potential relevance to development practice already in progress, including in other sectors, documenting it and reporting on its implications to target audiences within the development community.

The programme is designed to develop over time. The first stage is likely to consist of the documentation of experience in the development sector to date, reviews of emerging work in other potentially relevant fields and support for a limited number of micro-projects to test and evaluate potentially valuable new methods. The results of this first phase would then be reviewed by the network leading to the selection of further studies and pilots over the second half of the project.

Activities

- Initial meeting of working group to discuss a common approach to working, identify longer term priorities and interests of members and other individuals and networks with which the group might want to engage (year 1)
- Examination of new forms of communicating academically produced material to selected audiences of development policy makers and practitioners through pilot project (year 1) and subsequent evaluation
- Commissioning of two overview studies to examine assess the relevance for development knowledge processes of current developments in the visualisation of information and of the oral record (years 1 and 2) followed by identification of areas for further research and development
- Assessment of currently available interactive visual presentation/ navigation tools and their potential value for the development sector (year 1) and Pilot Project to test the function and value of 'information trickle' technology to serve an identified community of practice (year 1, leading to analysis of emerging possibilities and further research/ development
- Market research to identify potential user groups with which the programme may relate and establishing means of doing so (year 1), followed by assessment of user needs and experience of introduction and use of new tools and processes and the development of training tools aimed at enabling users to shape the information and communication environment relevant to their work

Planned outputs

- Pilot studies with evaluations
- New tools /processes/training materials available via web-site to help organisations improve their IKM and to increase the IKM competence of their staff
- Book summarising potential for innovation in this area, reporting on studies carried out and discussing next steps
- Support for sustainable networking on these issues
- Published research on all key issues covered.

Interaction and dissemination
- Development of relevant networks
- Release and testing of pilot artefacts within organisations/sectors
- Active web site/ publication of research
- Engagement with EADI IMWG, Euforic and other relevant networks
- Involvement of Southern colleagues and of people working on development related issues in particular sectors – health, agriculture, NGOs, academic libraries etc
- 'User groups' both North and South
- Active web site/Publication of research

WORKING GROUP 3 – MANAGEMENT OF KNOWLEDGE

Clearly the knowledge and learning approach can and does provide useful tools and approaches which, if properly constituted and thoughtfully applied, can address some of the symptoms of the institutional malaise faced by modern development organizations. (Ben Ramalingam 2005).

This working group will aim to analyse, among other things, the following:
- How are individual organizations (and different types of organizations) managing their knowledge management and knowledge sharing strategies?
- How does knowledge sharing take place within development as a sector?
- What are the knowledge needs of the different constituencies (South, North, practitioners, researchers and policymakers?
- How are these knowledge needs being addressed?
- What is the effectiveness and impact of knowledge sharing and knowledge management strategies?
- Which tools and techniques are being applied to knowledge sharing in development?
- How to develop a more inclusive approach to knowledge management for development discourse and practice.

Participants
The field of knowledge management for development (KM4D) is supported by a highly active network comprising a diverse and committed group of people. However, the lessons learned in this field do not go beyond preaching to the converted, and evidence-based results of the effectiveness of KM4D strategies are scarce - at best. While information and knowledge professionals (in the field of development) are the primary group involved, active engagement with researchers, policymakers and practitioners will be sought. It is a specific aim of the working group to involve the latter in deliberations, to assess their knowledge needs, and to improve their understanding of the role of knowledge and information in development approaches. Professionals in both North and South will be engaged. They will include:
- Information professionals and librarians
- Knowledge management specialists
- Researchers
- Policymakers
- Programme managers
- Field workers.

Core group
Sarah Cummings is an Information Specialist at the Information and Library Services (ILS) of the Royal Tropical Institute (KIT) and co-Chief Editor of the 'Knowledge Management for Development Journal;
Julie Ferguson is Manager of Knowledge Sharing at HIVOS. She is a member of the ICT4D Collective at Royal Holloway College, University of London, and is also a co-Chief Editor of the 'Knowledge Management for Development Journal'
Ewen Le Borgne works on the Resource Centre Development programme and the development of multi-language websites at IRC International Water and Sanitation Centre
Kingo Mchombu Professor of Information and Communication Studies, University of Namibia
Ben Ramalingam is the knowledge and learning specialist at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI), UK.

Rationale/scope

The past 10 years have seen the widespread adoption of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) which have strengthened the possibilities for development organizations to manage their knowledge strategically. Knowledge management relates to how organizations create, retain and share knowledge. The related conception of knowledge sharing is the means by which an organization obtains access to its own and other organizations' knowledge. These approaches have facilitated a new emphasis on sharing of knowledge within development because knowledge, particularly the fact that the right knowledge should reach the right people, is increasingly important to improving the efficiency of development interventions and improving outcomes. In addition, the breaking down of the diverse knowledge gaps within and between the different vertical layers active in development (grassroots, local, regional, national and international) and the horizontal layers (practitioners, researchers and policymakers) now seems for the first time to be within our reach, both South-South and North-South.

The tools that facilitate knowledge sharing within development are growing at a tremendous rate with the developments enshrined within Web 2.0. These technological tools include: Intranets, yellow pages, platforms for online communities and web sites, and many more. Despite the continuing development of such tools, there is very little understanding of how they are integrated within the knowledge sharing strategies of development organizations. For development organisations in the South, such technologies might not always be so appropriate. Other tools such as radio, video, illustrated print materials, CDs, DVDS etc may be more relevant. It is not only the newest tools which are little understood but also some of the traditional tools are not fully understood either – particularly in bottom up and participatory strategies of human development. For example, in the South, radio drama, mobile phones and text messages, TV soaps, and video documentaries are among the most effective tools for social communication. However, although these new and older tools offer great potential, either in combination or individually, it remains important to encourage a more people centred approach to knowledge sharing. A technocentric approach to knowledge sharing only provides tools and the means to the end. Human interaction and commitment is essential if the goal of more knowledgeable development interventions is to be achieved.

The last 10 years have also seen an explosion of partnership working and networks of both individuals and organisations across the development sector. Such networks have both an intra-organizational and inter-organizational knowledge sharing function. Knowledge sharing is usually one of the main purposes of these networks, either for its own sake or as the basis of further collaboration and co-operation in partnerships. Networks have attracted considerable attention with many practitioners and some specialist attention to studying the processes involved. However, there is still little understanding of how these networks are actually working or, in particular, of how knowledge passes from networks to the knowledge and information systems of the organisations that participate in them.

In addition to networking, other strategies for knowledge sharing need to be reviewed, such as older tools like diffusion of innovations, to see how they can be revamped and used in the new context. In the case of African NGOs, other tools such as: training, study visits, capacity building of local organisations have potential to bring about social change. In Africa, however, the prime knowledge sharing tools are still oral communication tools such as: story telling, discussion forums, social clubs, and edutainment based approaches –songs, dance, and drama etc.

Overall Aim
Development sector actors have an improved understanding of the links between management of knowledge and core development processes

Objectives
1. **Exploring how knowledge is currently created and applied within development as a whole and within different constellations of development organisations**
    – How are organisations gaining access to, managing and exchanging knowledge?
    – How do some organisations create internal and external barriers to knowledge sharing
    – How do culture, language and geographical factors, such as distance and isolation, affect the knowledge management process?
    – What tools – and combinations of tools – are being used?

2. **Examining the human face of knowledge for development**
    – How are the human aspects of knowledge management receiving attention?
    – What is the role of gender in these processes?

3. **Identifying approaches that have been successful in bridging the knowledge divides and distilling the approaches in good practices**
    – What is the important of culture and language in the existence of knowledge gaps?
    – Why do some sections within development not communicate?
    – Identification of relevant tools and techniques; and
    – Identification of relevant approaches.

4. **Developing instruments for evaluating the application of knowledge management within the development sector and development organisations**
    – How effective are strategies for knowledge management and exchange?
    – What is their performance and impact?
    – Benchmarking different approaches within and between sectors.
    – How does knowledge management and sharing impact on organisational performance?
    – What is the potential impact of knowledge management and exchange on the Millennium Development Goals?

Activities

- An analytical overview of the literature on knowledge management in development organisations and development of a framework for cross-organisational comparisons (year 1) followed by a study of how knowledge is created and applied in the policymaking process, organisational case studies and the presentation and discussion of findings with development organisations

- Identifying the key actors (individual, organizational) in determining how knowledge is created and applied in development and starting a series of attitude surveys (years 1,3 and 5), followed by needs assessments of different development sector actors (Practitioners, researchers, policymakers) and the development of a strategy to promote use and understanding of knowledge-related strategies and tools within development

- Commissioning overviews of experiences of knowledge divides (year 1) which will be discussed by a cross section of development actors at an innovation workshop and the identification of appropriate tools and approaches for bridging knowledge divides

- Literature reviews and discussions on the link between M&E and knowledge management, leading to the identification and divulgation of new methodologies for assessing the impact of knowledge management strategies

Planned outputs
- Guidelines for knowledge sharing
- Checklists of key issues
- Review of tools used to support knowledge sharing
- Sustainable network supporting the understanding and practice of knowledge sharing
- Published research on all key issues covered.

Interaction and dissemination
- Creation of new networks related to specific constituencies
- Development of EADI IMWG and linking with KM4Dev
- Involvement of Southern colleagues and of people working on knowledge sharing in specific sectors – health, agriculture, NGOs, academic libraries etc
- Active web site/Publication of research